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COUNTRY GIRL FROM DALEN

NORWAY BY NICO JUNGMAN · TEXT BY BEATRIX JUNGMAN

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PRECARIOUS TRAVEL

NORWAY

CHAPTER I

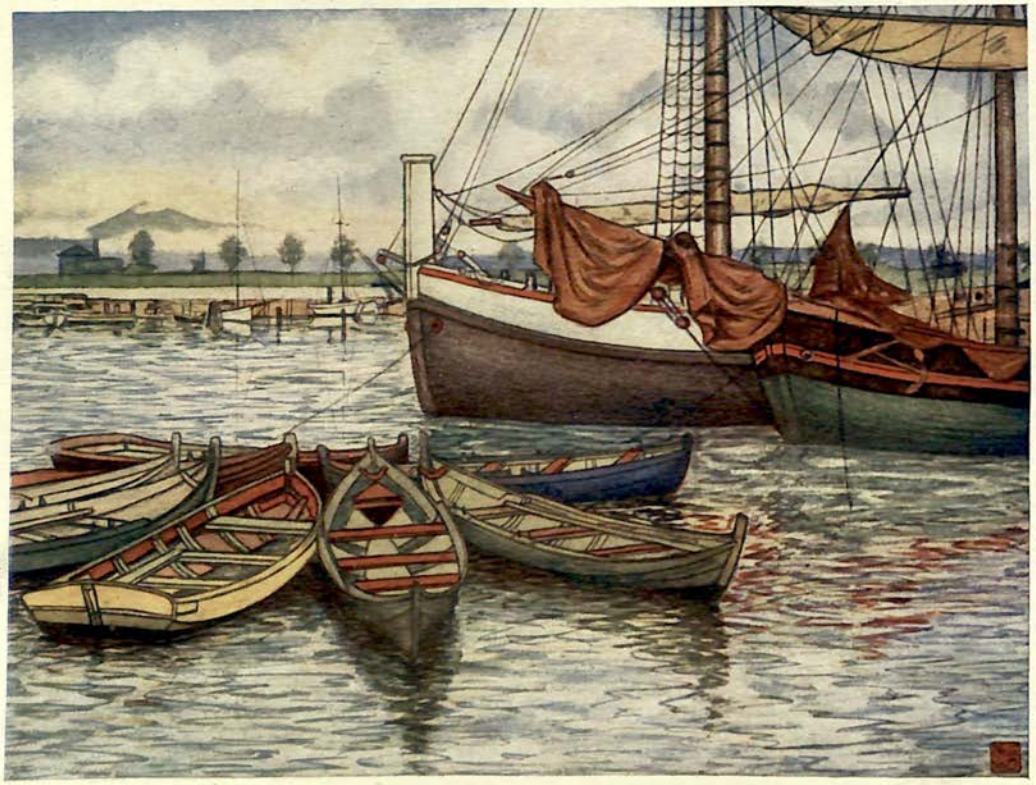
PRECARIOUS TRAVEL

Of the sea voyage to Norway the less said the better. It is my habit to be ill when I am at sea. That is unfortunate; but habit in itself engenders a mode of philosophy that makes many of the evils of life more easily bearable than they might otherwise be. I expect to be ill, and literally lay myself out for it; but Nico takes up an attitude of aggrieved surprise that the ocean should thus overcome him, and consequently is a far greater sufferer than I am. However, it is easy to assume a more or less frivolous tone when all is over, and the fact must be admitted that the voyage to Norway is almost invariably unpleasant to the majority. From the Continent, one can go overland; but such a country as Norway should be

approached by sea. Still, many a valiant sportsman prefers the land for his return when the autumn winds begin to blow, and so it is not surprising that less hardy natures are inclined to do the same. It was summer when I visited Norway for the first time; and, although one has frequent chances of viewing the coast as one steams along it from Stavanger to Trondhjem, I did not really begin to take any interest in the country until I had rested and eaten for some days in the latter town. Certainly I had one experience in Bergen during the two or three hours that we stopped there on our way north. With my usual insatiable thirst for dissipation, I insisted on visiting a circus I had discovered upon the outskirts of the town. The performance was not very thrilling; but we are neither of us difficult to please, and we stayed rather late. Thus, when we returned to the quay the gangway of our vessel was being pulled up. Nico made a rush for it, and was saved; but could not prevent the sailors from completing their task, and thus I was left lamenting. However, the sailors finally threw me a rope, and I managed to scramble on to the deck. It was most undignified, and, I am afraid, from the safety of the deck a most laughable spectacle;

TRONDHJEM—OLD BOATS

The form of the ancient Viking ships is still preserved in these boats



and I fled to hide my embarrassment in my cabin, ultimately going supperless to bed.

In Trondhjem it rained all day and all night, and the inhabitants cheerfully told us that it was always so. Nico, however, painted in the rain, enveloped in mackintoshes and encompassed by umbrellas, and was much disgusted to find that he attracted no attention at all. Accustomed as I am to be an object of inquisitive interest to the inhabitants of small Dutch towns, I was rather relieved to be taken so absolutely for granted in Norway, in spots unfrequented even by ardent fishermen.

At Trondhjem we were delighted with the delicious salmon and sea-trout; but after some weeks of salmon for breakfast, salmon for dinner, and salmon for supper, I found myself wondering whether it was all that it had seemed to me at first. I am rather ashamed to have to confess that, in spite of the fact that wherever English was spoken the chances were that the conversation turned upon salmon or trout fishing, neither Nico nor I know anything of those earlier and more exciting passages in the salmon's career which culminate in his presence at the table. It may be said that, with the exception of the Germans, who visit the coast-line in ship-loads, there are practi-

cally no *tourists* in Norway. Fish seem to be the main object of the stranger within her gates; and, as I have long despaired of grafting a sporting taste upon the artistic temperament, I decided then and there to leave the subject severely alone.

Besides the anglers, many men go over for shooting. There are still wild animals to be found; licences are very cheap; and the Government even offers a reward for the slaughter of certain beasts. In the case of the rarer animals, such as the elk and the wild reindeer, certain restrictions are placed upon the foreign hunter. On the payment of a sum between ten and twelve pounds he is allowed to kill three reindeer and one elk. The native hunter suffers from the same restrictions; but his licence costs him very much less.

All this has little to do with Trondhjem. We were rather unlucky there, and were not, perhaps, so much impressed as we ought to have been. Calculations based upon careful study of the guide-book proved to be incorrect, and we found the doors of the Cathedral constantly closed against us. As it is *the* object of interest in the place, we were somewhat impatient, and, when we did contrive to obtain entrance, were not in any way mollified to find the building pervaded by

COSTUME WORN IN THE BERGEN DISTRICT

spectacled and reverential Germans, who bestowed superciliously indignant glances upon us, as on persons who were unjustly sharing a view arranged for their party specially. It is certainly a most beautiful building, and is being restored in a worthy manner. I remarked as much to Nico at the moment, but was immediately suppressed by the ancient guardian acting as our guide, who begged me in very stately broken English not to interrupt his discourse. Later we went to a music-hall and sat through a most extraordinary programme twice repeated. Nico ordered beer, and was served with an immense plate of variegated sandwiches in addition. This, I believe, was in accordance with the law that forbids the sale of intoxicating liquors unless food is served with them. All over Norway the most complicated laws are in force with respect to drink, and these laws seem to be different in every town and village. I have not gone into the subject deeply; but it is certainly a rare thing to meet with a drunken Norwegian in the country parts.

Trondhjem always has been, and still is, the crowning place of the Norwegian kings. It seems to me that it is a long way to go for such a purpose; but I concluded that it was an affair in

which the kings alone were concerned. We walked out to a beautiful waterfall near the town, called the Lerfos, and came back by rail. Some idea of the speed attained by the trains may be gathered from the fact that, although the train had started when we reached the station, we were able to board it quite easily after it had gone some distance. Then, one very wet morning we decided that we had had enough of the place, and, shaking the mud from our boots, we took train to Hell. I refrain from the obvious little jokes that may be made upon such a journey, and merely record the fact that we arrived very cold, and soon became very wet during our stay there. The station buildings were all locked up; and we wandered about disconsolately, waiting for the cart which was to meet us and drive us to Sælbo, where we had decided to spend a few days. The vehicle which we had chosen was a *stolkjærre*, and I must here explain some of the difficulties of locomotion peculiar to Norway. The mileage of railway is small in proportion to the size of the country: the natural formation of the land presents immense difficulties to the engineer. To these obstacles must be added the very hard winters, the heavy rainfall, and the exceeding

THE ROAD TO HELL, NEAR TRONDHJEM

This is one of the rare railway stations
of Norway

scantiness of the population in many parts of the country. Consequently, almost all travelling is carried out by means of an admirably arranged posting system. On all the roads, at distances varying from seven to eleven miles, may be found posting stations where horses may be changed; where, also, the traveller may eat and sleep. These wayside inns are generally farm-houses, varying widely in their capacity for the entertainment of man and beast. They are obliged to keep a certain number of carts and horses for the use of travellers at a specified rate per kilometre, fixed by the Government, such rates being subject to slight increase where particularly mountainous roads are concerned. There are three classes of vehicles in general use. The *carriole*, which is the typical Norwegian conveyance, is exceedingly comfortable and well adapted to its purpose; it is built for one person, and runs easily on good springs, and may be likened to an armchair on wheels, but so arranged that one can either sit in it with knees bent, as in an ordinary vehicle, or stretched out at full length in a kind of trough. This obviates the stiffness engendered by endless hours of driving in one position.

The stolkjærre, on the other hand, is a terrible invention, as much like one of our plumber's hand-carts with a rough wooden seat in it as anything I can think of. It holds two people and a certain amount of luggage. On the main roads one finds the carts fitted with something in the way of springs; but upon roads such as it was our fortune to be driven on, often badly in need of repairs, they were usually much behind the times, and it was a wonderful and awful sensation to drive for untold hours under such conditions.

The carriole and the stolkjærre have a small seat at the back for the boy who is sent by the proprietor, to be changed, along with the horse and cart, at each station; but in the case of the third method of locomotion—that is to say, with much style and excessive slowness—one takes over the responsibility of the whole affair—namely, coachman, horses, and carriage, which in this case is called *kaleschevogn*,—only to be laid aside when one arrives at one's final destination, and using the stations only for the purpose of resting and eating. To return to the carriole and the stolkjærre. It must be noted that one is expected to drive oneself, though, if anything goes wrong with the horse and cart, the driver is responsible.

WHITE CAP WORN IN THE BERGEN DISTRICT

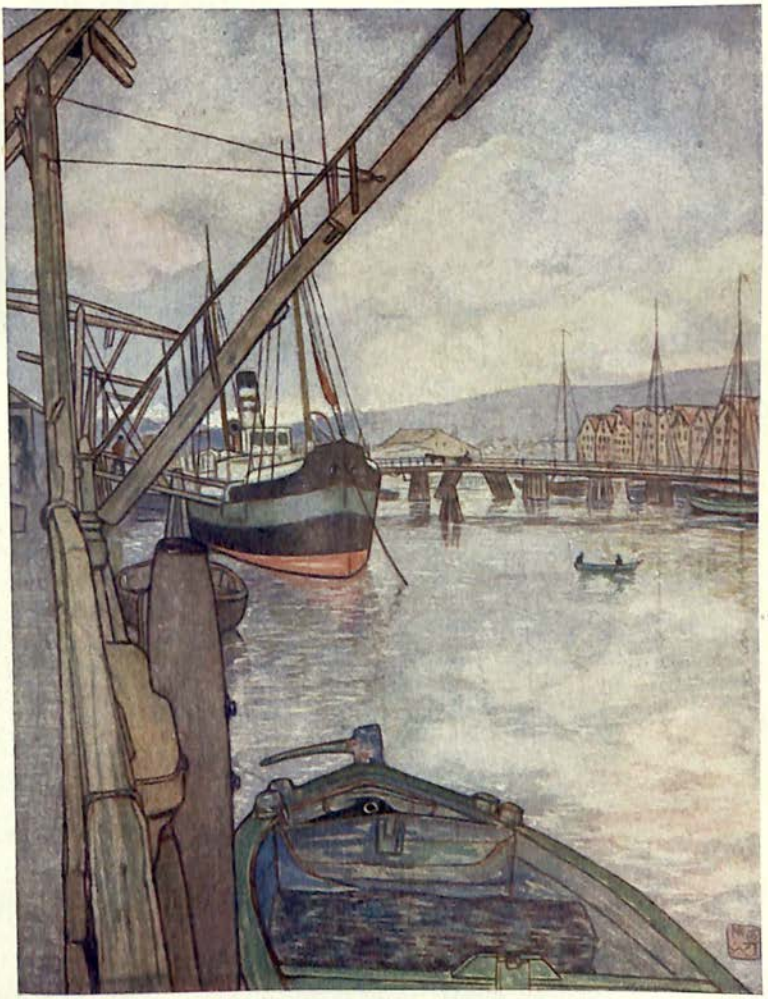
NIC

The mountain ponies are very surefooted and need no guidance; but it was our fate to be made acquainted with cattle that shied, with others that tripped, and with one pony (I recall the occurrence with horror) that stumbled on a narrow road, cut out of the almost perpendicular side of a mountain, three thousand feet above a roaring torrent. One wheel of our vehicle was actually in mid-air; but, fortunately, the horse fell on the shaft that was on the mountain side of the pass. Had this not been so, one of the stones that mark the site of such accidents on the Norwegian roads would have been erected to our memory.

It was at Hell that we had our first experience of the stolkjærre. This was after waiting some three hours, which Nico improved by making a sketch, while I looked for visionary wild strawberries in the soaking grass. Then appeared a cosy little carriole, upholstered in red velvet, and carefully covered with tarpaulins. This was immediately taken over by a prosperous station official, who drove off in comparative comfort. In a few minutes appeared the plumber's handcart which I have already attempted to describe, and in it a very diminutive boy, who manfully tackled the luggage, which he endeavoured to

make fast with a heap of very thin string, supplemented by straps from Nico's sketching equipment. Now we were really off, and I had time to study our pony. He had a long and heavy tail, which he would toss over the reins; the pressure he thus brought to bear he promptly obeyed, and we pursued a somewhat erratic course, varied by descents upon the part of the diminutive boy to replace the pony's tail. At length we reached a lonely farmhouse, at which, he implied, we were to alight; and we paid him his little bill, with the addition of a small *pourboire*. He shook hands very gravely with Nico, and, looking again at his money, inwardly decided that we deserved a little more attention, and shook hands with me too. We did not know anything about posting, and, somewhat overwhelmed with this ceremonious leave-taking, stood for some time in doubt as to what to do next. Soon an old woman appeared at the door of the house, and beckoned us in. I explained as well as I could, with the help of a phrase-book, that we wanted a horse and stolkjærre as quickly as possible. This seemed to amuse the old lady immensely. She laughed until the tears came into her eyes, and, taking the book from my hands, examined it intently upside down. As it

TRONDHJEM



was getting late and we had still a long way to go, Nico tried what could be done by a pantomimic display. Sitting astride a chair, he tied his handkerchief to represent the reins, and supplemented the performance with encouraging noises addressed to an imaginary steed. This tickled the people of the house; but I realised that we were no nearer our object, and decided to forage for myself. I boldly ascended the steep incline of logs upheld by beams that led from the yard to a very dark stable. I found no horse; but there was a stolkjærre without the ghost of a spring. I appealed again to the old lady, who had followed me, for a horse. She merely patted me, and, I think, urged me to be calm. Just at this moment another boy appeared upon the scene, and inquired whether it was really a horse that we wanted. Knowing the Norwegian for *horse*, I nodded vigorously. He smiled indulgently, but took no other step. After another half hour's alternate shouting and periods of calm, the boy roused himself to action and went off, while the old lady, who, I believe, was really kind and interested in us, took me into the kitchen and made up the fire, as she discovered that my hands were cold. I suppose she knew what we wanted all the time, and that we ought

to have taken things more easily; but at that time I knew nothing of the unwritten laws with regard to posting in Norway.

We had a terribly long drive, through magnificent scenery, going uphill for miles; and very desolate and wild it seemed in the half light of that damp and dreary evening. Not a human being did we meet, and scarcely a dwelling was to be seen along the route. It was midnight when we reached our destination, one of the typical boarding-houses scattered all over Norway, in which inhabitants of the towns not possessing villas of their own pass a few weeks in the summer. They are called "sanatoriums," generally provide fishing, and are always amid glorious scenery. The ones that I visited were splendidly managed, and exceedingly reasonable in their charges. Marienborg, the name of the small sanatorium in which we stayed at Sælbo, is exquisitely situated above a very charming lake, and new beauties discovered themselves in whatever direction one wandered. The air is perfect, and the weather almost dependable, in the few short weeks of summer. It was now the middle of August. The hostess was carefully tending her strawberry-beds, and pointed out to us a fine specimen that was still green. The meals at this establishment

LITTLE GIRL OF TELEMARKEN

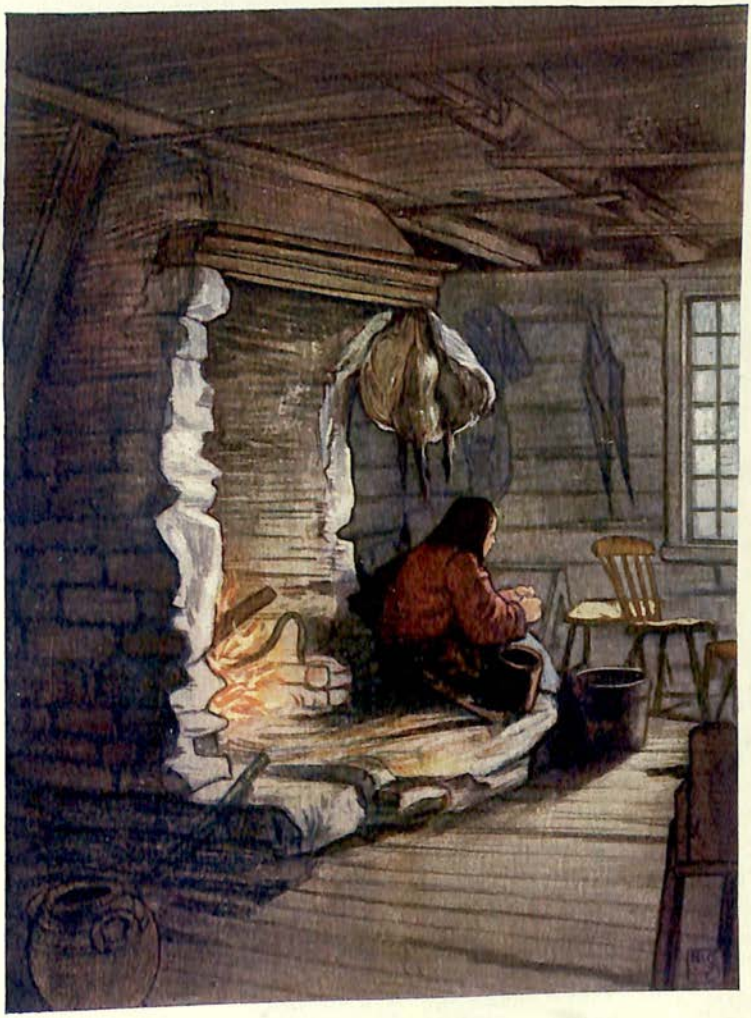
Telem
arken

may be taken, I think, as typical of those of the whole of Northern Norway. Breakfast (when you wish) consists of coffee and cream, eggs, and various odorous kinds of cheese, of which I can only remember the names of two, the reindeer cheese and the goat cheese. Dinner is at two o'clock. Salmon is a staple dish; the meat, generally mutton, is not much to boast of. The game, when one can get it, is excellent. The people seem to care little for any vegetable except potatoes. A great "feature" of the meal is the dishes of fresh berries served with an abundance of delicious cream. The milk, which is a general drink, is always skimmed. The bread is an acquired taste, cinnamon and caraway seeds being often used as a flavouring. A strange bread, which at its best form was rather pleasant, consisted of sheets of wafer-like thinness and considerable size, broken up to the requirements of the eaters. This is served with every meal. One seemed to be eating tissue paper without pulp. Though it is difficult to believe in its nourishing qualities, a Norwegian meal would be incomplete without it. Amid more gorgeous circumstances it is rejected for a delicately flavoured smooth wafer which is really pleasing with butter. In places

near the sea we were delighted with the abundance of prawns and lobsters; prawns of such perfection I had never tasted before. It is very difficult to get fresh butter. As a rule it is made in the saeters in the mountains, where the cattle are kept in summer, and on account of the heat is very much oversalted before being sent down.

We stayed some time at Sælbo, as the only way to leave it was by riding along a narrow bridle-path for over a hundred kilometres, and this was not likely to be very pleasant. The only way to avoid it was by partially retracing our footsteps, and this we liked still less. Nico had become devoted to the picturesque log buildings with their delightful grass roofs studded with flowers, and even in some cases actually bearing small trees; and I had discovered a dear old woman who passed her time in knitting curious triangular gloves. She had been nurse in an English family many years before, and could speak a sort of English. She loved to tell me tales of her former charges; she did not seem to mind how much I understood, and no more did I. Her two sons were in America, whence they sent her a sufficient allowance to keep her in comparative comfort, and in addition to this she sold the gloves she passed her

MAKING THE DINNER—A COTTAGE INTERIOR AT SÆLBO



time in knitting. She lived all alone in a log house consisting of one large room, which served her for all purposes except sleeping (a tiny cabin built in the main wall served for that), and containing very little furniture, the peasantry in Norway having the good sense to appreciate the advantages of space. Large tables with folding legs are fixed with hinges to the wall, and when not in use are hooked up out of the way. In one corner of the room was the round whitewashed open fireplace and chimney which are characteristic of these log houses—infinitely to be preferred, from a comforting as well as a picturesque point of view, to the tall iron stoves generally in use. The stoves have their qualities, however, being narrow and made in four or five divisions above that intended for fuel, which is invariably wood. Each of these compartments has its own temperature, and is to be used with discretion for drying and heating purposes. One word of warning: do not put your boots in the partition nearest the fire.

At our sanatorium all the visitors ate at one table, and we were charmed at our first acquaintance with a custom which holds good all through Norway. When the meal is over all the guests wait for the hostess to rise; then they follow her

BERGEN.

Bergen

example and gravely bow, thus thanking one another for the honour conferred during the repast. This practice is observed wherever two or more people are seated at the same table, even though they may be absolute strangers.

We had now discovered that by crossing the lake on a very old steamer we should reach a place called Brottem and thence proceed northwards to a spot from which we could pursue our journey. We parted from the lovely smiling place with many regrets, and, boarding the steamer, found we had it to ourselves. At a bend in the lake Sælbo was lost to our sight, while on either side of the narrow water the banks rose precipitously, thickly wooded with pines. The sun had disappeared, and the air was growing cold, when suddenly the steamer stopped, the captain proclaiming in a matter-of-fact tone that the engine refused to work. We ascertained that we were in no actual danger; but out of sight and sound of humanity, on a tiny and very ancient vessel, we were in a position of unpleasant possibilities. We remained stationary for two hours. Then one of our three navigators had a brilliant inspiration. That was to examine the engines, which had not, apparently, occurred to any of them before! After a little coaxing the vessel

BERGEN.

Bergen

began to move again; and we eventually landed on the farther shore of the lake, very cold, very hungry, and much belated.

Here we found a large farmhouse surrounded by many outbuildings, and evidently prosperous. We were received with enthusiasm by the burly proprietor, his servants, and a Norwegian family engaged in fishing who were staying at the place. A splendid meal was prepared, and, to my joy, a wood fire was roaring in the tall iron stove of a large bedroom set apart for me. The fishing family knew a few words of English, which they were as much pleased to speak as we to hear. Next day was a Sunday, and at dinner Nico in his ignorance expressed a desire for something to drink, which was refused, as nothing could be sold on that day. The kind fishermen came to the rescue. They plied us with rare wines, and under that friendly influence we thawed gratefully. I found them enthusiastic whist-players, and eagerly desirous of mastering the intricacies of bridge. I did what I could in one short afternoon to enlighten them, and soon after sent them two scoring boards. Probably they will evolve a game for themselves which in the next generation will utterly eclipse bridge, as bridge has eclipsed whist and solo.

ON THE FJORD, SUNDALSOREN

BROTTEM, AUNE, SLIPER, GJORA, SUNDALSOREN, ETC.

CHAPTER II

BROTTEM, AUNE, SLIPER, GJORA, SUNDALSOREN, ETC.

We had a splendid pony and quite a comfortable stolkjærre from Brottem to the next station, where we took the train to our resting-place for the night, a well-known fishing hotel at Storen. One of the excellent incidents of travelling in Norway is the service, which is exceedingly well done by women. They are so quick and clean and agreeable that they contribute to the enjoyment of one's wayfaring. The deft maids at the Storen hotel were no exception to the rule; but the place was not very sympathetic to us. We stayed only long enough for Nico to make one or two pictures of spots which pleased him. Then we began a long drive right across the country, half the distance off the main road, having as our destination the town of Molde. We lingered for weeks over our drive, staying for days at the various little stations which appealed to us specially by reason of that mystic

attraction some spots have and others lack, which can neither be analysed nor explained.

At a place called Aune we left the main route, and here the road began to be exceedingly bad—far and away the worst we came across in Norway. Before this we were struck with the splendid way the roads are constructed and kept.

Our hearts were in our mouths one dusky evening as we galloped down the narrow road cut out of the precipitous side of a mountain: seven hundred feet below foamed and roared a torrent. We reached the valley in safety; but I had terrible dreams about frightened or unsteady ponies for nights afterwards.

At Aune we met two very handsome Norwegians, who were crossing the country on foot. They were taking a holiday in this way; but many poor students are obliged to make use of shanks' ponies for the strongest of reasons. This slow driving during long distances becomes very expensive, and I presume that the continual stoppages at hotels must be an important item. I mention these good-looking people, not because we found them very interesting, but because I was surprised all through Norway to find so few men with any of the external qualities of the Viking.

COUNTRY-WOMEN SELLING BERRIES ON THE ROAD TO STOREN

I had imagined that the type was strongly implanted in the Norsemen. Even in build the majority are unsatisfactory. A careful study of statistics on the subject informed me that the Norwegians are the tallest European race; but I can only suppose that the average is brought up by a certain number of excessively tall men. Also, the Norseman is inclined to become fat early in middle life. On the whole, the middle class is not to be distinguished from the usual type of Dutchmen and Germans with which we are familiar. The women have been treated in a much kindlier fashion by Nature. Even those whose features do not actually admit of their being called handsome have such smiling frank faces that they are most pleasant to look upon. In using womenkind so extensively in the place of man-servants the Norwegians show wisdom and good taste.

From Aune we had a terrible drive over a road in the making. The old path was too bad to use at all; and the new road jerked us here up a foot, there down a foot, as the various processes gone through in levelling had been completed or not. At last we left the roadmakers behind us, and drove for some kilometres along the old road to a

small station called Sliper, a terrible drive which by this time will, fortunately, have ceased to be possible.

We were delighted with Sliper. At the station were two houses, the station's and another. We stayed at the other. We had actually ordered the horse, meaning to go on, when a beautiful Norwegian woman beckoned to us from her doorway in the other house. She invited us to warm ourselves while we were waiting, and gladly we climbed up the twenty-five steps leading to her large room. The flap table was painted bright red, as were the benches, and the few pieces of furniture were carved and painted wood. The brilliant colours were mellowed by time and perhaps by smoke from the wood fire, which burnt in a round open grate in a corner. An immense cauldron was suspended from a chain in the chimney. In it was stewing a savoury mess of mutton and potatoes. In front sat a pale little girl, the only living child of the beautiful hostess. The latter had the most perfect teeth I have ever seen, and waving masses of golden hair. At either end of the big room was a small bedchamber. One the family used, and the other was kept for the possible guest. I believe that, as the station

NORWEGIAN CAPTAIN

house had room for us, we were quite wrong in staying with the neighbour; but I think the station people were not very energetic—they did not object so much as they had the right to do. In any case, there we stayed for three days, living and eating in the big room with mother and child. With the exception of our supper on the first night, we had no meat. We lived contentedly on potatoes and eggs, fruit and cream, and abominable butter. It is strange how far the atmosphere of a place can defeat prejudices.

However, soon Nico became hungry, and I finished my small stock of literature. We took our horse and stolkjærre, and without a boy we followed the post on the road to Gjora. When we had driven a few kilometres, keeping the post carriole with its bag and its horn well in sight, we discovered that we had left the purse containing most of our wealth behind us at Sliper. Nico drove back at the pony's best pace. This best pace could not have been very wonderful. An eternity seemed to be passing as I sat on a big rock, waiting for the return of the companion and the purse. A few cows walked by me in inquisitive procession. I effaced myself as much as possible. I am ridiculously afraid of cows. Even the

Norwegian cow, which I know theoretically to be the gentlest of creatures, can subdue me with a look and drive me to seek for any available hiding-place. At last I heard wheels; but they were coming the wrong way. The two men in the cart looked at me curiously, and drew up in front of me. One addressed me in very good English. It appeared that the post-driver had warned the people at Gjora station of our near arrival, and had presumably mentioned that we had no boy. After they had allowed an hour and a half to elapse, they were good enough to become anxious, and had come to look for us. I explained our delay, and we all waited for Nico's appearance. At the end of another half-hour he turned up. The horse had lain down quite calmly and refused to go on. He had tried kindness, which was of little use; he had waited for a passer-by who could speak the horse's language; in course of time the beast, having enjoyed a siesta, got up and continued his journey. Hence the delay.

All's well that ends well. When we arrived at Gjora we met with a warm reception from our host and his family. The stove was lit in an immense bedroom which was *en plus* furnished with two box-like beds of questionable shape, a small chair

FARM-HOUSE AND MILL AT GJORA

which was masquerading as a wash-hand stand bearing a small jug and basin and two minute towels, a writing-table, and many photographs of the Royal Family. Also, there was a tame blue-bottle which worried me very much. All our blandishments were of no avail with the heartless insect. The open windows could not persuade him to leave us, and, in the flickering light of one candle in the large room, it was impossible to get rid of him by foul means. Every night as we went to bed he started his low buzzing and spoilt my temper and my sleep. Nico didn't mind it a bit.

The dining-room at Gjora was palatial. I sat in a carved armchair upholstered in crimson velvet, and we ate from beautiful silver, serving ourselves with sugar from the very choicest old bowl I have ever seen. The cupboard, the sideboard, and the clock were beautifully carved and coloured. We lived on a princely tin of corned beef. For three days it provided us with two meals a day, and very good they were.

Next door to the station—indeed, I believe, the house in other times is the station—an English family were spending the summer, fishing and walking. The English-speaking man we met on the road was the gentleman's gillie. They regaled

us physically with various edibles from the Stores and spiritually with salmon stories, and when we left they sped us on our way with a new stock of reading matter. The country all round is exceedingly beautiful. The river which provided the fishing for our compatriots winds along by the road; or rather I should say that the road follows the course of the river for many miles through narrow passes in the mountains which press round —many of them snow-capped, as one may see when the veil of cloud which envelops them lifts to allow a sight of their summits. The station is in a cosy little hollow among these white-headed giants; and the weather is noticeably finer, the atmosphere softer, than at the preceding and succeeding stations.

Between Gjora and our next resting-place, Sundalsoren, we drove through magnificent scenery. I think it will be admitted that the Sundal is at least as beautiful as that famous valley which lies almost parallel to it—the Romsdal. From the road one may see glaciers and snow mountains. Here and there are notices warning the traveller to drive fast. This is more especially for winter, when huge snow avalanches are frequent. The road crosses from left to right of the river. We

MOUNTAINS AND RIVER AT GJORA.

drove over bridge after bridge, backwards and forwards, as the river pursued its erratic course without regarding the convenience of roadmaking mankind. We arrived at Sundalsoren at sunset, and were enraptured with the beauty of the snow mountains. Whether it was thus arriving in such glory, or that the place has really a most individual charm, I cannot say; but for me Sundalsoren is a memory entirely *couleur de rose.*

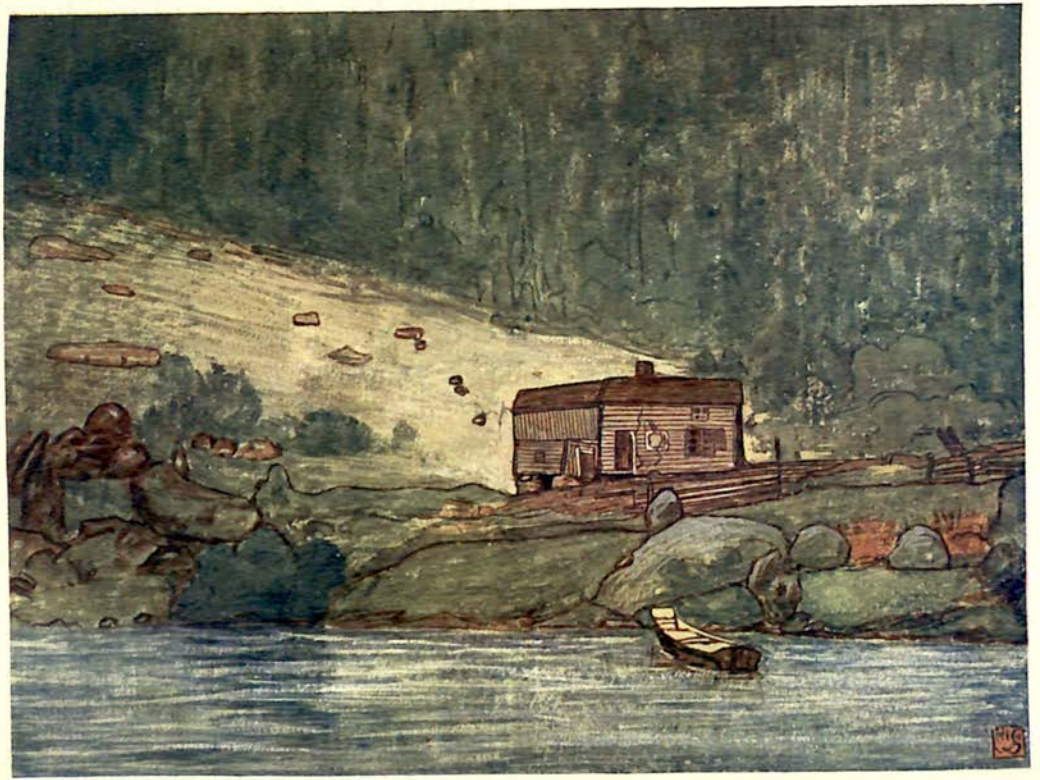
It is a small fishing village at the head of a fjord. The fishermen's little low houses are built round the concave land, which is washed by the waters of the fjord. On the stony beach before the cottages are spread fishing-nets and tackle, including the bright silvered balls which, I suppose, attract the fish. Two wooden quays stretch their long arms into the water, and from the farthest point of them one may get a delightful view of the village. The character of the place is Dutch. It is almost as if a little street from Volendam had been dumped down amid the mountains and the snows.

We were sorry to part from this charming spot when the little fjord steamer called for us and another passenger. Slowly we steamed through the fjord, now calling at a tiny hamlet on the left bank, now dropping a passenger in his waiting boat

on the right side; here picking up three English fishermen, boat and all; there leaving them near their destination rested and refreshed. The steamers that ply the innumerable fjords are accommodating craft — none of your haughty vessels making hard-and-fast rules as to times and places. Although they are often punctual in their departures and arrivals, they will slow down and pick you up in whatever part of the fjord you choose to meet them, and put you down too if you have your boat along with you. Also it is to be noted that the food on the smaller boats is quite as good as one gets on the large steamers that make the journeys on what may be called the outer coast of Norway. Indeed, the bigger vessels are so often loaded with various strongly-smelling dried fish that the whole atmosphere is impregnated; which must rob some passengers of any appetite the occasional few miles of rough open sea has left or given them.

After quitting Sundalsoren we drove through two or three good stations, and arrived late on Saturday night at a small place which, as it is on no map and many consultations with Bennett's have resulted in the conclusion that we were quite off the beaten track, must be nameless. At the time

A LITTLE FARM ON THE RIVERSIDE AT GJORA



I knew the name—we had it on the bill;—but no one seemed to be able to place it, and now I have forgotten. I have a theory which may account for our presence there. At one of the previous stations we had telephoned in advance for a horse and cart to be ready, as it was very rainy and very wet and getting late. The horse we had was very fast; the driver was a cheerful person with a slight knowledge of English. Within a kilometre of the station, where, I presume, an equipage was in waiting, he offered to drive us straight on to our destination, because we had expressed great satisfaction with the trotting of his pony. We agreed, and tore through the tiny village built round the station in great haste, egged on, perhaps, by a guilty conscience. Then we drove for miles and miles until at last, at half-past ten at night, we reached the unknown little spot which I must perforce call X.

It is possible that, knowing that the expectant farmer at the avoided station would telephone to the station on either side of him, the driver preferred not to face them until their anger should have calmed and he should have had time to invent some excuse. I do not know to what extent he expected to be blamed; but I am afraid

the man we telephoned to must have been rather mad, and so I imagine that we were driven to this quaint spot because there our sin would not find us out. Inadvertently I left a large silver scent-bottle there, and acknowledged the loss to be a judgment on me when I found it impossible to find the place again.

When we arrived we went to bed. In the morning we had coffee and bread and jam; and Nico painted. At three o'clock we were hungry, and when at length preparations for a meal were made our appetites were ravenous. A dear little girl waited on us—a very pretty child, with beautiful hair. She brought on the table a few slices of thick and very fat raw bacon and some caraway-seed bread. Hungry as we were, we could not eat that. We tried to ask her what more there was. She left the room, and soon came back carrying the *pièce de resistance* of our meal—two soup plates filled with a paste made of flour and water, such as we used to employ in the days of scrap-books. On the top of this floated a little melted butter. With this she brought a basin of powdered cinnamon. That was our Sunday dinner. They were such sweet people that we feared to hurt their feelings, and Nico ate all his

OSTRE KANALHAVN, TRONDHJEM

plateful and half of mine. The half that was left we divided between our plates, which then looked quite empty enough. We ate caraway-seed bread for supper and caraway-seed bread for breakfast. With the help of our phrase book, we gathered that they never ate meat and very rarely had fresh fish.

The place is situated on water which, I suppose, is a fjord, and there are three or four houses besides the one at which we stayed. They made us understand that they were not in any way prepared for guests, and had some difficulty in providing us with a horse and cart. I should be very much interested to know the name of this little place. It is within two hours' drive of Molde, and as far as I could make out it had scarcely ever been visited by the foreign traveller. We were astonished to find ourselves so near to this big town, for we had calculated that we had at least another half-day's journey to make; which proves again that somewhere we had overstepped our mark.

Molde is the most beautifully situated town in Norway. It has a population of 1800 souls. It is a very important port of call for all the steamers which coast between Bergen, Trondhjem, and the North. The town is built along the

mouth of the Romsdal Fjord, and from almost any point a view of the grand Romsdal Mountains is to be obtained. The panorama on a clear day is gorgeous. To see the sun setting over the fjord and its background of snow-tipped peaks is to have a vision of fairy-like colour and beauty that takes one's breath away. All over Norway as one passes through the valleys and the winding fjords picture after picture are witnessed in rich succession, each seeming more beautiful than the last; but now, as at a certain distance of time I endeavour to recall their individual charms, I think that these glorious evenings in Molde occupy the most pleasant place in the memory of one of Norway's ardent admirers.

How rash thus to limit one's enthusiasm! From Molde we went by steamer to Næs, and, after resting awhile at an hotel and eating an excellent supper, took a miraculously comfortable stolkjærre and had a long drive to Horgheim in the brilliant moonlight. I wonder how many visitors to the Romsdal have done the same? Imagine the charm of it. The delicate jagged edges of the mountains on the right of the road stand sharp and clear against the blueness of the sky; as the road winds in and out the Romsdal

THE TOWN OF MOLDE.

Horn reveals or conceals herself bathed in moonlight; innumerable waterfalls foam down from the heights with plashing music, looking like silver streamers hung out to decorate the beautiful way of some mystic procession. Our driver was for the time an affinity: no longer a guide in our pay, or in that of the hotel, taking tourists through a world-renowned stretch of scenery, but a romantic Norseman slowly opening out to us a valley of delight, his possession by inheritance and love.

He told us with a smile that was not quite incredulous of the little goblins with blue beards that, according to the peasants, haunt the fields and fjords of these parts. There are good and bad pixies, and much blame is laid at the door of the bad ones for any mischances that come about. What wonder that the people are superstitious folk? Perhaps it would be better to call them mystics. What sounds and sights may be heard and seen in such a land! Our Norseman pointed out a certain group among the jagged pinnacles of the rock, and told us a legend describing how a bridal party, instead of being the happiest of the happy, quarrelled and fought and were by magic turned in an instant into stone. Here they stand as a warning to future bridals. The groom and

bride turn away from each other; the best man stands for ever with a foaming tankard in his hand; near by is the well-fed priest; apart and solitary is the figure of a disconsolate lover. Look at them in the moonlight: you will see them all quite distinctly: soon they will step down from their heights and mix with mortal men again. The air is full of movement and strange sounds.

During the long way back, the wonderful person who had been appointed to drive us entertained us with legends of the gods and Vikings. These brave admirals of old times met with burial befitting their state and courage. The ship which they had sailed so well through wild storms and wilder battles was dragged ashore, and this and nothing less was the coffin for their richly-dressed mortal remains. The souls of the Vikings killed by the sword went straightway to Walhalla, where their ideal of bliss was meted out to them in guerdon for their bravery. At cockcrow all the heroes marched out and fought furiously one with another; but at midday all the wounds were healed, and the rest of the day was spent in banqueting with the great god Odin. Walhalla was said to be a hall of such size that the roof could not be seen. In it was a forest of golden trees. The walls were

WOMAN SPINNING, SUNDALSOREN.

Sundalsøren

decorated with shields and warlike weapons, and through each of its five hundred and forty doors eight hundred warriors could walk abreast.

I was sleepy, and I was awed with the majesty of all we had seen; but I wondered what sort of heaven was arranged for the wives and daughters of the Vikings!

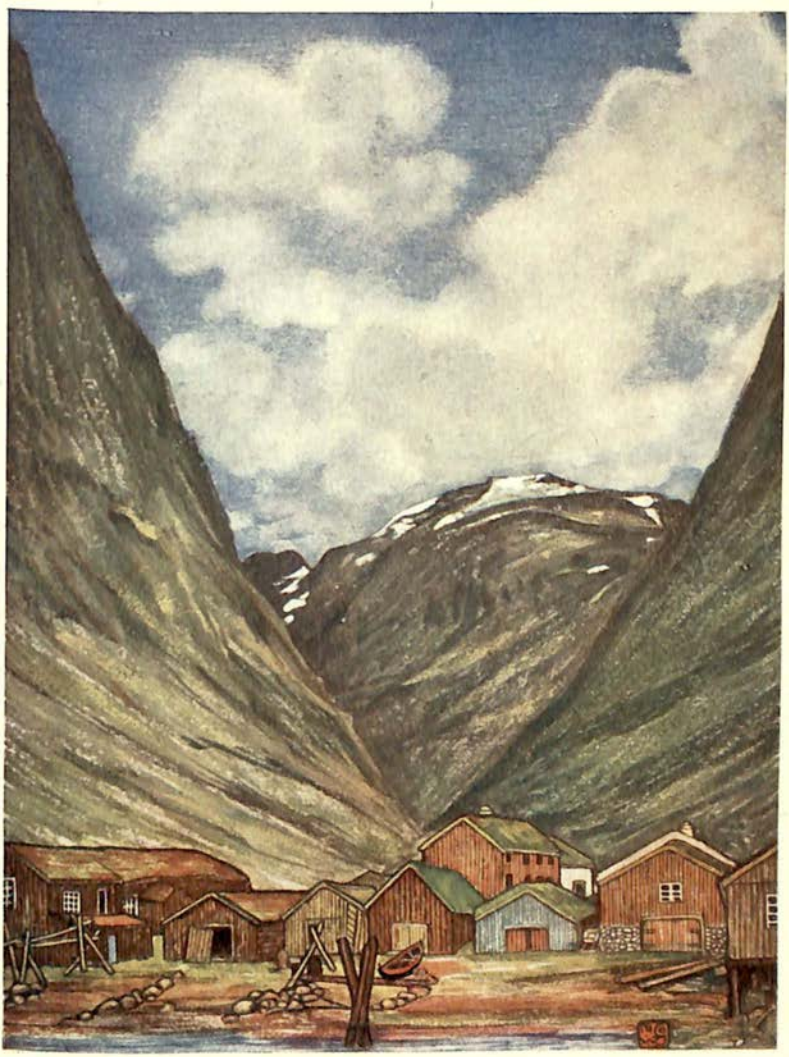
Some days after this moonlight drive I came across a book containing details relating to Norwegian mythology, which may be of some interest. Everyone knows that most of the week-days derived their names from these Northern gods. From Ostara, the goddess of spring, we get the name of our spring feast, Easter. Decoration with flowers and the custom of Easter eggs are as old as Paganism; and our Christian forefathers, to facilitate the change to the new religion, adopted many Pagan rites and dedicated them to the service of the true God.

Odin was the father of the gods and the greatest among them. Thor was the red-bearded god of storm. Armed with his mighty hammer Mjolmer, he slew the powerful giants of winter—not without much difficulty, however; for at first, overcome by sleep, Thor relaxed his vigilance, and the wintry giants stole his hammer and buried it in the hard

earth. Awakened and conscious of his loss, Thor appealed to Freya, the beautiful and benevolent goddess of love and spring. Her gentle influence subdued the giants of snow and ice, and Thor, seizing his opportunity, regained his mighty weapon, which he wielded to such effect that the giants were killed and their fortifications broken down.

Though the gods are usually triumphant in these old Northern sagas, the demons on occasion gained their bad ends. It was thus in the story of Baldur, the god of light and most beloved of all the gods. In the full beauty of his youth he was killed by the power of Loki, the embodiment of envy, hatred, and revenge, and incidentally the god of fire. In the beginning Loki lived happily with the other gods; but Odin cursed him for ever for his wickedness. It was foretold that the loved Baldur was to be the victim of some treachery, and the gods made efforts to prevent such a catastrophe. Frigga, who was the wife of Odin, placed a spell upon everything, so that there might be nothing in Nature that could hurt Baldur. On account of its insignificance, the mistletoe was forgotten by the goddess, and of this Loki made an instrument of destruction. Having fashioned a dart out of a branch of the innocent shrub, Loki persuaded

SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAIN AT SUNDALSOREN.



Hodur, the blind brother of Baldur, to hurl the weapon at his brother in sport, the innocent child believing that this wood, as all other, was charmed. The arrow pierced Baldur to the heart, killing him, and causing universal mourning among the gods. Among the demons were Skretti, who has left his name to many a haunted rock in Norway, and Niki, who is a terrible water demon, still dreaded by the ignorant folk in the mountains. Each year he demands victims and carries off the children who stray within his power. Our familiar nursery friends Jack and Jill are descendants of Hjuki and Bil, the ebbing and flowing tides, the tumbling crests of which, breaking one over another as the waves wash the shore, are rather aptly described in the nursery rhyme.

ON THE FJORDS

CHAPTER III

ON THE FJORDS

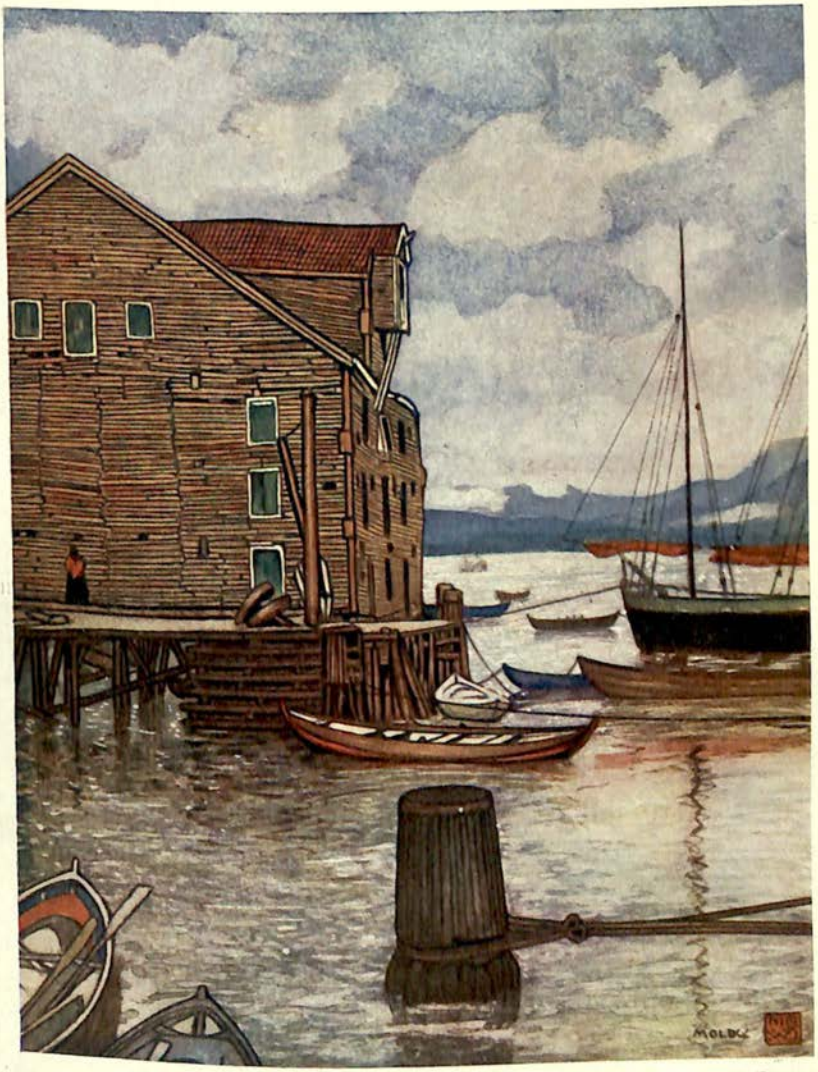
We were awakened rather roughly next morning. At an early hour two steamers landed at Næs, and a stream of tourists emerged. For two hours vehicles of all sorts filed past our hotel. They took the drive we had taken in solitude and moonlight the previous evening, and by the time the last carriage of the goers passed out of sight the first carriole of the comers-back was visible. Our dream was ended. We fled the Romsdal, thanking a merciful chance which, at least for a time and for our first impression, had given us the Romsdal in its most ideal beauty.

Moonlight also was it when we left on an almost passengerless steamer, which took us up the glorious fjord back to Molde. Here we passed another week to our profit and satisfaction. Some interesting old wooden buildings on the water, about to be pulled down, provided subjects for Nico's brush,

and I wandered about and admired, peaceful in the consciousness that when Nature for a time should cease to suffice me I had in reserve a resource—the hotel library consisted of a sixteen-volume History of England and a few odd volumes of an Encyclopædia!

In an old book on Norway which I came across, the author mentions a visit he made to a little village near a river which he calls Osterthal. It was rather an involuntary visit: they had lost their way.—"We came to a minister's house, whose son's wedding was being celebrated. It was full of people of all descriptions, forming a droll caricature scene. [At the date this was written all the country-folk would be in national costume.] Our effects were brought in by the multitude without our paying any attention to them; the parson's silver plate was lying about in every direction, his watches hung in every room. [The author mentions this apparent plenitude of watches on several occasions, as giving a sign of prosperity.] A hundred persons at least were present of the poorest sort, eating and drinking in every room of the house, yet such is the honesty of the population that everything was safe. Our host received us most generously, and would accept of no reward;

OLD WAREHOUSE AND BOATS, MOLDE.


MOLDC

he was even seriously displeased that we presented his daughter with a couple of ducats, because she would load us with bread and other provisions. We spent the night in the utmost conviviality, and proceeded the next day over waste mountains and marshes on foot, till we crossed the frontier and arrived at Lerma."

Later we read that in one place they were indeed most hospitable and caught fish enough to find the family for eight days. What joy!

In another place he tells us that the bread, "generally made of the rind of trees, was miserable."

Again: "Bonaparte is the common theme of the Norwegians. In no country is such praise lavished on him as in this, where his power is only felt in undesigningly promoting the country's advantage—from this standpoint the Norwegians admire him and calmly survey the convulsions around them."

It is interesting to observe that at this date the writer gives the population of Norway as being under a million; now it is considerably over two millions. He remarks that the women, though strong, robust, and generally over six feet in height, are sadly wanting in feminine charms. In our days they have changed. We may suppose

from practical experience that what the Norwegian women have lost in stature they have gained in beauty. The number of pretty women is well above the average.

In the fulness of time we left Molde by steamer, and so southwards along the coast, stopping for a few hours at the ruins of Aalesund, the thriving little town that was entirely burnt down in January 1904. Of the twelve thousand inhabitants who were almost all bereft of house and home, only one lost her life, and that through rashness. She was an old woman who, finding she had forgotten some cherished possession, insisted on entering the burning house to recover it. At least, this is what was told me by an inhabitant of the place; and I take it to be correct, for the Norwegians of to-day are as honest and trustworthy as were their ancestors at the beginning of last century.

We landed on this island of ruins and climbed the pretty hill which overlooks the town. Thence we obtained a magnificent view over the sea, and were able to realise the complete and terrible desolation wrought by the fire. At the time of this disaster Nico was in Norway, and the whole country rang with the praises of the Emperor William of Germany, whose immediate and practical

MOUNTAINS AND FJORD FACING MOLDE

generosity was a theme for the warmest recognition. To judge from all we heard in different parts of the country, it would appear that he has won the heart of Norway, and has made himself immensely popular with the people.

The ancestor of our King William the Conqueror gives his name to a castle not far south of Aalesund. He was called Rollo the Walker, because he was so tall and heavy that no horse could be found strong enough to carry him. He conquered parts of France, and founded the Duchy of Normandy.

As far as I remember, from Aalesund south the steamer behaved in such a way that we thought it would be as well to leave it for a while, and we landed as soon as was possible at a charmingly situated island called Moldöen. For various reasons, the place was without a quay. In torrents of rain and buffeted by the gale, we scrambled off the steamer on to a flat-bottomed boat, and were rowed to the island.

What a dreary little place it seemed! Even though we had strawberries and cream at tea, and even though the best room was furnished with two beautiful bouquets of wax flowers under glass, the rain beat down such spirits as we might have had, and we went to bed disconsolate and

cold. The beds were extraordinarily uncomfortable. I tried three of the four in my small room, and stayed in the third in despair. I awoke to find the sun pouring into the room, and the strains of "Rule, Britannia" filling the house with gramophonic sound. We got up and dressed to the tunes of the "Marseillaise" and "Willie, we have missed you"; ate our breakfast to a popular cake-walk; and proceeded to investigate. It turned out that the hospitality of the house, which we had deemed ours alone, was shared by a commercial traveller. Steamer-bound there for two days, he carried about with him for use on such occasions five phones of different kinds. As far as we could discover, he made Moldöen a centre from which he radiated to various islands, bearing with him on his outgoings and incomings one or two of the instruments. He entertained us all day long with disquisitions on the advántages of this one and the disadvantages of that, with practical examples. This was a labour of love, for he "travelled" in machinery. He had lived for many years in America. He had a wife and family in Christiania, whom he was in the habit of seeing for not more than a week in the year. When we left the island he left too, and endeavoured to get me a berth on

MOLDOEN.

a southward-bound steamer which had about a dozen berths and fifty or sixty passengers. He was not successful, and we all sat up on deck; but I have a kindly memory of him for his excellent intentions and his music.

While we were on the island I saw several reindeer on the mountains opposite.

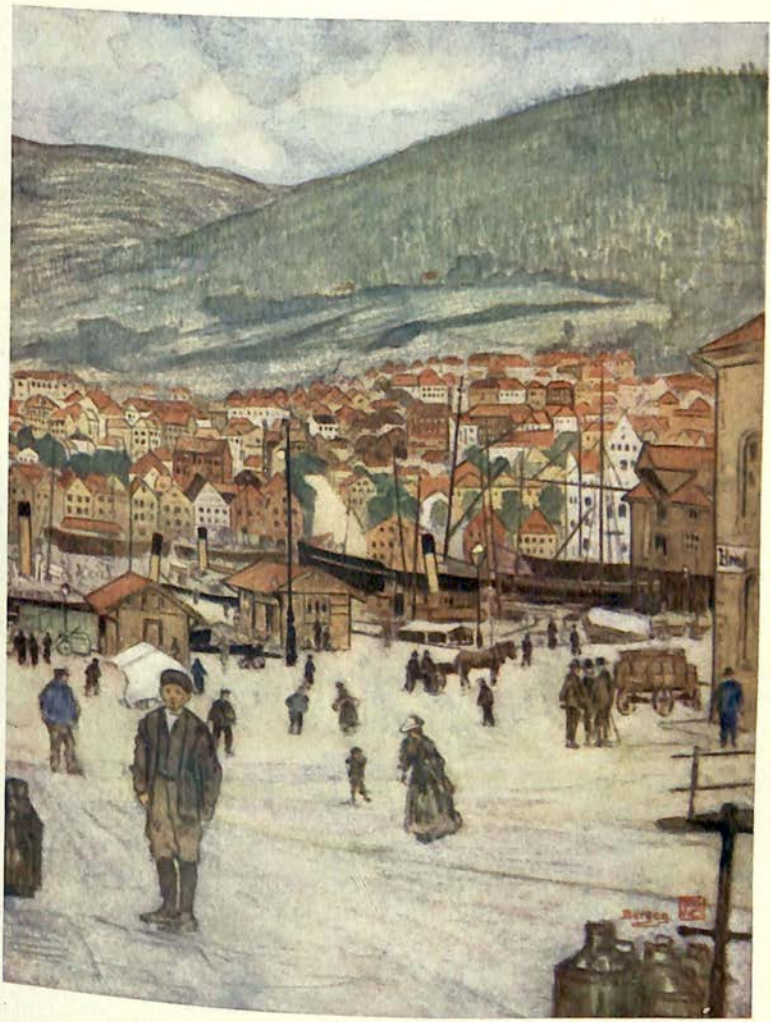
We had intended to travel from Moldöen along the Sogne Fjord; but, finding it impossible to control the steamers coming from the north, we were obliged to postpone our visit to these celebrated parts. A friend who was staying at Balholm in the 'eighties related to me how one fine day, when they were boating on the fjord, they saw a whale. All the craft on the water scuttled for their lives, and the whale, after creating much excitement, quietly made its way back to the open and was seen no more.

We arrived at Bergen in pouring rain. Surrounded as this town is by high mountains, which, while protecting her from the extreme violence of the storms, attract and imprison the clouds, it has rarely a rainless day. We stayed for three weeks.

Bergen, which is still one of the most important ports of Scandinavia, has had an interesting commercial history. It began its growth in the

eleventh century, and its importance may be judged by the fact that in 1302 a decree fixed the number of its dock labourers at two hundred. In these centuries several commercial treaties were concluded between Norway and various Powers. Among others is still extant an agreement between England and Norway. A German body known as the Hanseatic League, recognising the great commercial importance of such a town as Bergen, began in the thirteenth century to obtain a footing there. Until their arrival the Norwegian trade was almost confined to the summer months. The first step taken by the Hansards was to struggle to establish themselves during the winter. The Norwegians strove for a long time to prevent this, and as late as 1300, it appears, the number of Germans wintering at Bergen was inconsiderable. Later in that century the Hansards instituted a factory in the town; and, aided by three visitations of the plague, which reduced the population of Norway, and by extensive privileges granted to them by Magnus Kagaboter, which rendered it almost impossible for the Norwegians to carry on an independent trade, they arrived at practically controlling all the commerce of the country, and in other respects held the trump cards in their own

BERGEN



hands. As they increased in power, these foreigners became domineering, in Bergen especially, where they committed acts of aggression and violence against the Norwegian population. The native merchants in the various ports made a stubborn and vindictive resistance; but the Germans were there in such numbers that when at last the Norse efforts were crowned with success and the foreigners to some extent driven out, these towns found themselves much reduced in strength. Bergen, however, aided by her enormous fishing trade, continued to be the most important commercial town, and the Hanseatic population struggled hard to keep the supremacy which they had enjoyed. During the seventeenth century the Thirty Years' War weakened them in their own country, and the growing supremacy of the Dutch fleet was another influence against them. It was not until the middle of the eighteenth century, however, that the German factory entirely ceased. Even now the houses of the Hanseatic quarter are only beginning to be pulled down. When we were in Bergen we watched the process of destruction, and admired the immense strength of the foundations of enormous piles on which the old Germans built their dwelling-places and store-

houses. In the quarter there is an interesting museum, containing many Hanseatic relics, including much domestic furniture.

To-day, with its trade and its immense influx of visitors to the country, Bergen presents an animated sight. One of my favourite haunts during solitary wanderings was the fish-market. On two days of the week—Wednesday and Saturday, I believe—if one gets there early enough, the little quay is crowded with amusing folk, the solemn fishermen from the islands, who bring their spoil to be disposed of to the best advantage, and the shrewd becapped fishwives, determined on not giving an ore beyond the lowest possible price. It is delightful to listen to their rapid speech with its quaint inflections. Some of the women wear charming starched white caps like those of Sisters of Charity, and others tightly-fitting black or blue bonnets with little frills relieving their austerity. Here and there, under a flight of stone steps or built like a niche in a blank wall, one catches a glimpse of a tiny stall where twisted cakes containing much spice are sold, or of the wooden boxes of varying sizes and prices which the Norwegians use where we use baskets and bags. Some are plain, some ornamented with poker work, and others more

A FAIR MAIDEN OF NORTH BERGEN

NORGE
Jonna Kielland Holm

or less elaborately painted in the brilliant colours and the conventional flower-designs beloved of the Norsemen and the tourist. The Norsemen employ the boxes in every size, and for every purpose, from the big receptacle which contains the whole outfit of a young man or maid starting in life to the tiny five-ore box which holds little Ragna's ball of cotton and her jointed crotchet-hook.

The place is surrounded by seven hills, which we did not climb, and has *en plus* a theatre which we did not visit. We did, however, take ourselves to a music-hall, which, if it satisfied the Bergenites' idea of comfort and entertainment, proves them to be a people of contented mind. That, I am afraid, is one of the blessings of which I am deprived. In spite of the seven hills, the Hanseatic remains, and the rain, I believe I was bored in Bergen. I was not to interrupt Nico, because he was working very hard; I could not roam about much while all my clothes were in a continual state of being dried; I could scarcely afford to read a book an hour at one and two kroner apiece; I was quite destitute; even Satan found no mischief for my idle hands to do; and I was glad when the money we were waiting for arrived and we were able to make our way inland. I am just beginning to

grow rather fond of Bergen, and by the time I see this grumbling in print I daresay I shall wish to take back all I have written in any way derogatory to the place.

We left in the middle of the night, going by steamer the whole way to Odde in preference to taking train to a place called Voss—a remarkable railway journey through grand and varied scenery, the track being almost entirely hewn out of solid rock. There are no fewer than fifty-five tunnels between Voss and Bergen. However, we contented ourselves with that old-established means of transit, the fjord steamer—in this case a biggish vessel, though without sleeping accommodation beyond the smoking-room and a ladies' small room on deck. Fortunately, there were only two feminine passengers. I was one. The other was an American girl who, making a European tour with the necessary aunts, had left them in luxury and comfort in Berlin while she made a carriole journey over Norway. At the time we met on the steamer she was beginning to regret her persistence, and we were both glad of each other's company until she left the country to join her relations.

In the morning, drawing the curtains of our cabin, we beheld the glorious scenery of the far-

BERGEN BOATS AND WAREHOUSES.

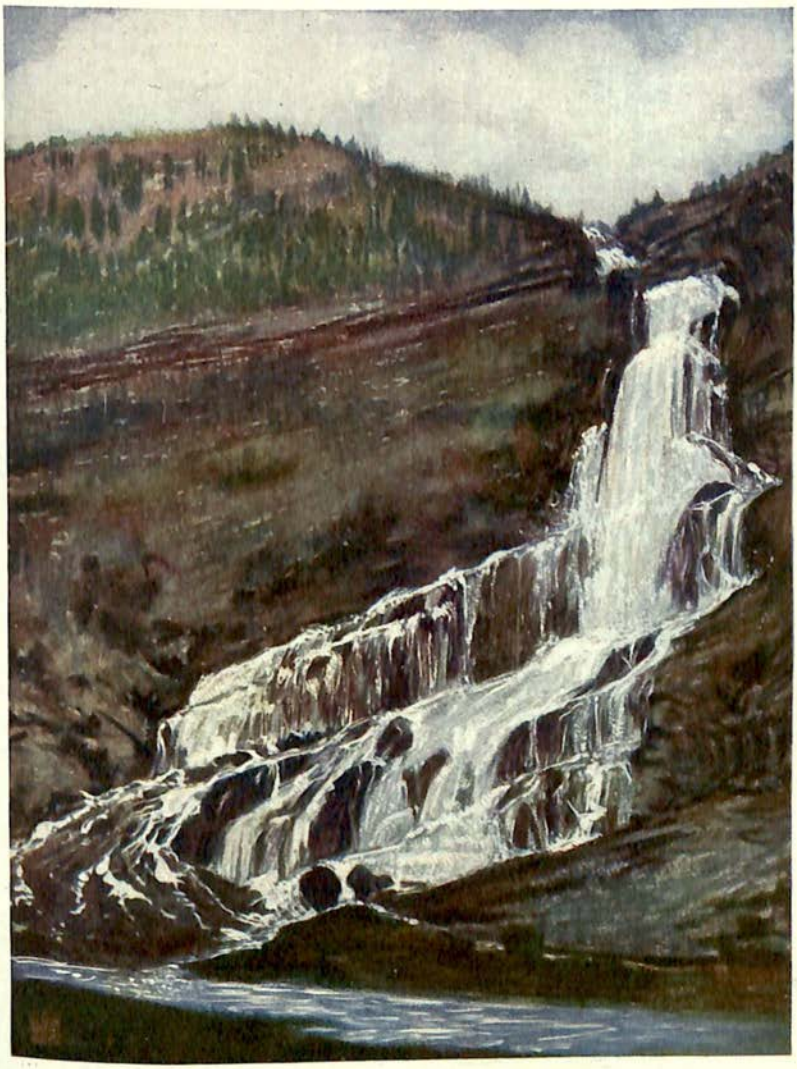
famed Hardanger Fjord. We breakfasted with good appetite on biscuits, delicious prawns, and excellent chocolate. I do not know if the menu sounds tempting; but the coffee left much to be desired, and by that time we had grown accustomed to stranger mixtures than shell-fish and chocolate. The weather was magnificent, and thus, though it was rather late in the year, we enjoyed all the pleasure offered by Nature to visitors of this delightful arm of the sea without the disadvantages of mosquitoes and crowds experienced by those tourists who pay their homage of admiration in the usual season. We sat on deck the whole morning, enjoying the wonderful panorama that unfolded itself before us at every turn of the fjord. As the steamer twisted in and out we noticed that the fjord was generally edged with a narrow band of fertile, smiling country; immediately above, the wooded heights rose precipitously, parted here and there by silver torrents that poured foaming over the rocks into the fjord. Occasionally, as we passed close by these cascades, the spray they threw off caught the sun's rays and showed for a moment a wonder of all the imaginable beauty of the commingling of the diamond with the rainbow. High above were the snow-crowned mountains and

the blue whiteness of glaciers. What a wonderful country! It seems sometimes that Nature is too prodigal. Where an hour of such beauty leaves one overwhelmed with marvel and delight, days and weeks of a panorama ever increasing in splendour dull the senses and—dare I say it?—almost satiate.

Late in the afternoon we stopped at a small station to pick up a few passengers who had chosen to go so far by rail and carriole, and my American friend was much pleased to recognise two young scions of French nobility, whose titles she had read on her journey from Molde to Bergen, when most of the passengers were invisible through illness. She was convinced that Dr. Conan Doyle had been her neighbour at table, and she begged me to find out if he had been in Norway during the summer. She had a wonderful gift of enthusiasm, and did our rather jaded spirits a great deal of good by that intense keenness which is characteristic of her race.

After dinner we came again on deck, to find the moon pouring her soft light over all and imparting to the earth a romantic illusiveness. However, it was also exceedingly cold, and we retired early, Nico to smoke and doze, and I with our American

VÆFOS, HILDAL, HARDANGER



to discuss the war between North and South and other important matters; of course, we discovered friends in common. All through the nights one passes on these fjord steamers one is constantly aroused by weird bumpings and stampings, and we had learnt from previous experience that this was due to the stoppage of the steamer at different stations to pick up and deliver cargoes. About eleven o'clock on this particular night, the noises were of such an extraordinary character, and seemed to last so long, that we put on our big coats and went out on the deck to explore. By the light of two small lamps a herd of fifty cows was being embarked. Some of them protested vigorously against stepping on to the thin plank bridging the water between them and the boat. The whole business was tiresome and lengthy. At last a band was improvised to pass round the animals' bodies; one by one they were hauled up, willy-nilly, by the crane and pulley, and dropped into their allotted quarters.

An hour or two later we were startled from our sleep. The scene was reversed, and the cattle were landed at their destination.

About four o'clock we were again disturbed by the running backwards and forwards of many feet.

When the steamer settled into silence, we dropped off to sleep, too quickly to discover that all motion had ceased and that we were at a standstill. We were not shipwrecked; nor had we met with any untoward accident. We had arrived, and, though most of the passengers had left the boat and finished their night in more comfortable quarters, we slept on in blissful ignorance until after eight o'clock, when Nico came to inform us that all our baggage was at the hotel and breakfast ordered.

We dressed with alacrity, and made our way to the enormous hotel of Odde, which is about the most popular resort of the tourist in Norway, though when we were there late in August it was without guests. We breakfasted in a lofty room, and noticed that the waitresses, who are famed for their allegiance to Norwegian costume, had relinquished it with their hopes of other foreign guests, and were soberly dressed in black. The day after our departure the proprietor and his family left the place, and caught us up when we finally rested at Dalen. I wonder if Norway is glad or sorry when the enthusiastic but destroying tourist ceases for nine months to take up his abode within her gates?

MINOR ROMANTIC EPISODES

CHAPTER IV

MINOR ROMANTIC EPISODES

FROM Odde we returned to our old friend the stolkjærre, and the American girl took a carriole. In this manner we had a little variety, for we changed places now and then. Both vehicles belonged to one man, who drove with us all the way, putting up when we did. This prevented the nuisance of continual change of horses and conveyance. The driver assured us that the carriole had been used by the German Emperor. I believe that in the season a great point is made of providing every stranger with *the* carriole: hundreds are so honoured. Well, the Kaiser Wilhelm is a wonderful man, and he would be rash who should say, "This even the Emperor cannot do." To explain his frequent presence here, a story must be told. A few years ago, a young German lieutenant, riding down the steep road not far from the Laatefos on his bicycle, swerved from the straight

course, and was hurled into the raging waters beside which runs the road. The incident is supposed to have been witnessed by a child and an old man, and a few weeks afterwards the poor victim's body, torn by the rocks beyond all recognition, was found at some distance from the spot where the disaster happened. The Emperor, with two hundred men, arrived to search for the body, and a stone to the soldier's memory has been erected by his Imperial Majesty. There is another story on the subject, which is only whispered; but our romantic friend seized upon it with eagerness, and wove a yarn of possibilities and improbabilities, of which she persists in believing the hero to be alive.

On our right hand, as we drove in procession from Odde, preceded by the carriage and pair of the French nobility, lay the Buar glacier. It was of a wonderful green which we had not before seen, inasmuch as many of the glaciers we had passed were almost covered with snow and débris, which concealed their colour. The road took us for some way beside a charming lake; after this we passed several beautiful waterfalls, the spray from one of which was so considerable that the road beside it was converted into a pond; and in the moment we

A HARDANGER COUNTRY GIRL.

took to pass through it our clothes were made quite wet.

At Seljestad we rested, and then drove zig-zag uphill, or, rather, our horses walked zig-zag, and we, on foot, cut across the winding road, and reached the top of the hill without much effort long before our horses were in sight. We were three thousand four hundred feet above the level of the sea, and the air was chilly. Matters were not mended when we drove down the hill: the sun had gone in, and the late afternoon at that time of the year is often too cold for enjoyment. Therefore we stayed awhile at a big hotel at Horre, and made acquaintance with a very warming drink, arac punch. After this we had recourse to it pretty frequently on our cold drives. Our driver tried to persuade us to stop at Horre; but it was still daylight, and we all wanted to get on. The landlady seemed rather chagrined at this obstinacy and bad taste; but on we drove for another half hour or so, when we arrived at Roldal. Here we found most of the hotels closed, and the owners almost on the point of departure. Also we found the young Frenchmen, who informed us that *they* had ordered supper for 8.30—to consist of trout and chicken. This, of course, was the supper

provided for the possible traveller, and of necessity was our supper too; but one of these boys apologised for its scantiness, and said he had only ordered for their party. This was rather a joke, as, acting on the advice of our driver, we had from our luncheon-place ordered supper to be ready at 8.30. However, the meal, as far as it went, was very good. Afterwards we all assembled in the one small sitting-room still available, and endeavoured to drink the white spirit which is drunk all over the country and called "aqua vita." To my taste it is abominable; but it is exceedingly strong, and perhaps this is a virtue which carries it far. We found two old packs of cards; the five of us played a good many rather ridiculous games, which amused us vastly, and brought the servants of the hotel to the door to discover the reason of our laughter. At breakfast we were all delighted with the delicious jam made from wild strawberries. Then we started on a day's drive in good spirits, the carriage and pair leading. Up, up, and always up, getting colder and colder by the way; a short rest at a wayside sæter; a drink of delicious creamy milk, not possessing, however, the warming qualities of our arac punch. The tiny masses of drifted snow which lie among the rocks, neglected

SKJÆGGEDALSFOS, HARDANGER

by the sun, increased in size and volume. Here, on one of the rocks by the wayside, a big snowball had been placed, probably by the youths who led us on. Colder and colder grew the air, until at last we turned a corner, and saw before us a huge mass of dirty snow. It was impossible to plough this, or otherwise to get rid of it: so we drove through a tunnel hollowed out in the snow. This was the coldest place we reached. Gradually we descended and got into a less icy atmosphere. All the same, we were exceedingly glad to get out and warm ourselves at a little farm, where we drank port, and I used what powers of persuasion I possess in the endeavour to render myself the owner of a particularly attractive ironing-board, wielded by a blob of wood that was the most delightful attempt at reproduction of a horse that I have ever seen. Neither offers of money nor blandishments had the desired effect, and I was obliged to leave the longed-for object behind me.

Cheered and fortified by our wine, we drove on to the spot appointed for our luncheon. Haukelidsæter is an enormous hotel under Government control. Prices are reasonable; they are regulated by the Norwegian Tourist Club. The immense dining-room is pleasing, being simple in design

and embellishment. Opposite the hotel is a building in the style of the much-admired old storehouses. It was closed while we were there; but in the season it provides excellent sleeping accommodation.

Here we fell in again with our fellow-travellers and their servant, and we ate very gaily together of tough stewed goat and excellent cream pudding.

We drove on, and arrived rather early at a very pleasant little station, of which, however, I have forgotten the name. It was only about five o'clock, and in Norway there is nothing satisfactory to eat between dinner at two and supper at eight or nine: so I bought half a kilogramme of chocolate, and asked for milk and cream. I had some difficulty in getting a saucepan; but eventually I discovered the kitchen and helped myself, to the amusement of the scarlet-coated maid, who was already making preparations for our supper. I made the chocolate, and we all drank it, after our fish supper, with the remainder of a bottle of a very sweet and cloying liqueur called Augustine, which we had bought at Haukelidsæter by general subscription, in place of the arac punch, which was not attainable. The American girl and I left Augustine severely alone.

Next morning I bought with much joy an old

HARDANGER HEADDRESS

and beautifully carved wooden box. I was very glad to give fifteen kroner for it; but, deeply attached to it as I was, we went off without it. I remembered it before we had gone very far, and raced back alone in the carriole. Then I caught the others up. Our driver expressing great curiosity as to my parcel, I showed it to him. He wanted to know the price, and I told him, rather proud of myself at having made a good bargain, as I thought; but he laughed discreetly, and informed us that in the depth of winter, when money is scarce among the peasants, their treasures are bought up by men, going round for the purpose, for next to nothing. Thus the summer tourist always pays heavily. If he gets things from the peasants themselves, they have to "get even" with the forced sales of the winter. As for the town antiquaries, the price they ask for their treasures would make a Dutch peasant blush, and anyone who has endeavoured to obtain the object of his fancy from such an one will realise that this is no light task.

That day we drove through mysterious pine-woods, which kept from us all the warming rays of the sun. Before we reached the forest the road followed the course of a river, and then, leaving

that, ran beside a lake. Most of the way we walked, to warm ourselves. It was late in the year for this route, and we were alone on the road—at any rate, for this portion of it. Later we met strings of peasants coming from a fair.

We had luncheon at a little place which was quite off its head with business. There had been a cattle fair some distance off, and all those interested were on the road, making their way home. During our drive that afternoon we met some of the prize-winners, horses and cattle decorated with ribbon rosettes of many colours, and carrying their certificates suspended from their horns or from their necks. The placing of the rosettes was amusing. In most cases the animals were attended by a handmaiden in a dark skirt, a black velvet bodice elaborately embroidered in coloured silk, and a fringed kerchief tied gracefully round the head, and falling down the back with the long thick hair. Most of the peasant women in Telemarken, of whatever age, wear their hair loose, as indeed do the poorer country women all over Norway. However, the prize cows were making their way but slowly, grazing unchidden on invisible food among the fallen leaves by the wayside; doubtless the women were the wives and

HARDANGER HEADDRESS

daughters of the burly farmers whom we had left enjoying their dinner at our last halting-place.

Somewhere that day we passed a turning in the road that, had we taken it, would have led us to the wonderful Rjukan Fos, of which romantic stories have been told. Many of the most beautiful spots in Norway are rendered more interesting by various legends connected with them. One cannot guarantee their accuracy; but they are very welcome. I quote this tragic romance as a dark gem set in the Rjukan Fos.

"Near the Rjukan Fos there is a path over the mountain called the 'Marie Stige,' on the brink of the precipice of the famous fall, which even at this day the traveller treads with fear, and which was discovered by a young maiden in the courage of love. It was by this path that the beautiful Marie of Westfjorddalen went with light and fearless step to meet the friend of her childhood, Ejestein Halfoordsen. But the avarice of her father separated them, and Marie's tears and prayers prevailed upon her lover to fly, to escape the plot formed by a treacherous rival against his life. Years passed, and Marie was firm in her constancy. Her father died; Ejestein had by his valour and nobleness made his former enemy his

friend, and after their long separation the lovers were to meet again. Ejestein hastened by the shortest way, the Marie Stige, to meet his beloved. Long had she watched for him; she saw him coming, and his name burst from her with a joyful cry. He saw and rushed to meet her, but fell, and the Rjukan whirled him into its foaming depths. For many years after this a pale form, in whose beautiful eyes a quiet madness lay, wandered daily on the Marie Stige, and seemed to talk with someone in the abyss below. Here she walked until a merciful voice summoned her to go and rest in the arms of her beloved."

All the way to Dalen our drive was brightened by the rosetted cows, making their way up the hill which we descended. The mountain rose sheer on our right, two thousand feet above the road; on our left, awe-inspiring precipices made us hold our breath, as every now and then we were obliged to pass a vehicle coming the opposite way. The young Frenchmen in the carriage and pair were driving immediately before us. Suddenly there was a crash, and down fell one of their horses. The outer wheels of the vehicle were over the edge of the precipice. For one terrible second it was as if an awful tragedy could not be averted.

A PEASANT OF SÆTERSDALEN.

Telemarken
Norge

The splendid little pony on the mountain-side held good his ground, and my driver, by sheer bodily force, half lifted, half pushed, the carriage from its dangerous position. The three occupants had jumped out; but the driver, almost paralysed with terror, was still sitting on his box. The pony had broken the shaft on which it had fallen, but, fortunately, had done itself no harm. Between them the men patched it up as well as they could, and we proceeded. We were not very far from Dalen, however, and the young men elected to walk the rest of the journey. We kept behind the carriage, in fear of further accidents, and went along so slowly that the walkers arrived some time before we did.

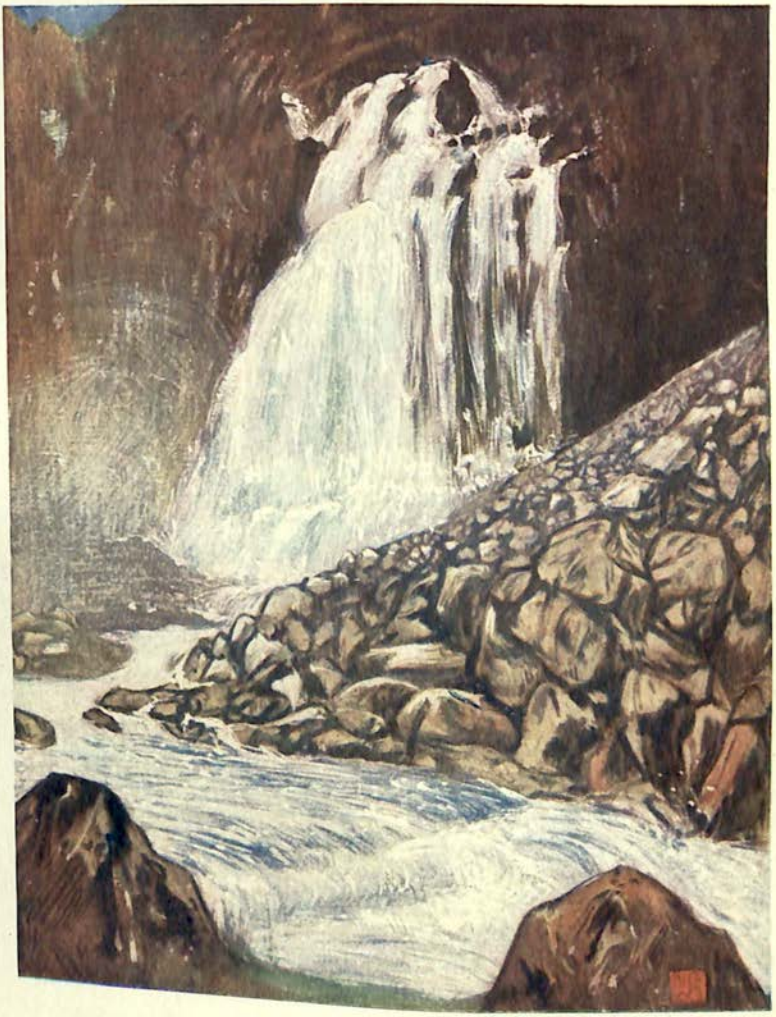
The big hotel at Dalen was closed, and we all took rooms in a smaller place almost opposite, which proved one of the most comfortable resting-places we had come across in Norway. Indeed, that very evening Nico and I made up our minds to stay there for some time, and so turned our supper into a farewell meal. In celebration, we drank one another's health in exceedingly sweet champagne, and then again in small glasses of arac punch, in which we invited our host and his wife to join us, thus establishing a friendly feeling of

which Nico and I reaped the benefit during our stay.

The American girl and the French youths with their valet were travelling together as far as Christiania: so we bade them good-bye before we retired for the night. Nico, in the fulness of his heart, announced his intention of getting up next morning at five, to see them off. He went to the length of asking the maid to call him when she should awake the travellers; and in the dark hours of the morning, when, following her directions, she awoke only me, I finished her work, and pointed out to Nico the necessity of fulfilling rash promises. My arguments were strong, and Nico got up and saw the party off. He was exceedingly pleased with himself when he came back.

We stayed for some time at Dalen. We were well fed, well lodged, and smiled upon by charming waitresses in their red sleeveless bodices and white frilled blouses; besides, we were favoured with most glorious weather. Nico worked hard, and found delightful models in the farmer's two daughters — one a lovely Madonna-like girl of fifteen, and the other a curly-haired little pickle of three. I passed most of the day hours basking in the sun and reading anything I could find,

ESPELANDSFOS,, HARDANGER



which resolved itself into a few numbers of *Cook's Tourist Gazette* and three numbers of Dowie's paper from Zion City, U.S.A. The American journals contained many violent remarks about the prophet's reception in England; but in one number I read he appeared to pity us for our denseness. This literature, advertisements and all, did not entertain me long, and I went to the shop which was part of the premises to see if there was anything I could buy. I found only a very ordinary assortment of German hand-made goods, together with a strongly smelling selection of various food-stuffs, and one or two drawers full of mixed sweets for the entertainment of the youth of the village. So I unpicked a blouse of my own, and sewed it together again by hand, and that very neatly. Then I looked through the papers again, and found that I had missed a few words in the course of several of the sheets, stating who was the printer of these effusions. One night a party of English folk arrived, travelling from Christiania to Odde, at forbidden speed: that is to say, by rising early and travelling until late they were making in two days a journey which is fixed by law as taking three. I persuaded Nico to go to them after supper and to ask them if they

had anything to read which they would exchange for the books I had carried with me and read three or four times. With great joy he brought back two magazines and a book.

Another day I hired a carriole and the farmer's son to drive me to the Ravngju (the Raven's Abyss), which is a rock hanging over a precipice at a height of fourteen hundred feet, above a dashing river. I learnt from my guide-book that the draught of air is so strong that if one throws a hat over the precipice it will be refused by the abyss and blown back. I tried the experiment with my own head-gear, for which, fortunately, I had no respect and but little affection. Contrariwise, the Raven's Abyss changed its reputed tactics and stuck to it; at any rate, I never saw it again, and I drove home bareheaded.

During our stay here I discovered with great difficulty a few more facts about the Norwegian peasants' poetic and very interesting superstitions. The little gnomes, in whom all believe, often attach themselves to special farms. If any of the horses or cattle appear to thrive much better than their fellows, the folk will explain it, entirely to their own satisfaction, by saying that such beasts are the favourites of the pixies, who steal fodder from the

A BOY OF SÆTERSDALEN

Sæters
dalen.
NIG

other mangers to feed the animals in which they have chosen to interest themselves. Sometimes the gnomes devote themselves, by petty vexations, to worrying the life out of the people to whom they bear malice. The milk turns sour, the butter is rancid, the cattle pine away; and all from no apparent cause. It is told that one such haunted family at last made up their minds to move very secretly, and thought to leave the fairy cause of all their trouble behind them. As the last cartload of belongings left the farm and the people were congratulating themselves that they would get away without being discovered by the malicious familiar, he popped his head out of an empty barrel, and piping, "Oho! We are moving to-day!" jumped on the cart and followed them to their new home.

The trolls are big giants who live in the mountains and are very rarely seen. These spirits always dwell in the seventh mountain visible in the blue distance. Thus, of course, they can never be approached by those who set out in search of them; but in their fastness they keep beautiful maidens stolen from earthly homes.

The huldra also is an inhabitant of the heights. She is a witch who takes the form of a lovely

woman, and meeting humans in the woods she lures them to follow her. Her dwelling is in the mountains, which she opens with a magic word. Inside is a gorgeous palace, filled with immense riches, and having dining-rooms containing splendidly decorated tables laden with all the food a Norwegian enjoys most, served on golden dishes. He who eats of these things is thenceforth in the power of the huldra. Occasionally he wins free; but never afterwards is he as he was.

In the country the folks speak of idiots and madmen as being "mountain-taken," believing that these are victims of the huldra's wiles.

If, however, the involuntary guest refuses to partake of the magic dishes in the mountain passes, he sees before his eyes the dishes of exquisite food turning to pine cones and slabs of earth, while the huldra loses her fascination, and can no longer hide from him the cow's tail by which she is to be known, nor can she keep him prisoner any longer. Without knowing how, he finds himself back in the woods on the mountain-side; and he cannot discover the entrance to the fairy palace.

At Christmas, and indeed during all festivities, these various unseen powers are propitiated by offerings of food and drink, which are placed out-

SUNDALSFJORD.

side the farm, and invariably disappear. I should not like to swear that no agency but magic is responsible.

At several of the trees on the land of the farm hotel at Dalen were fixed little shelters, each having a small entrance and a gabled roof. These, we surmised correctly, were for the birds. The Norwegians are very fond of the small songsters, and in many districts it is forbidden to destroy them. This delighted us, the more, perhaps, that we had spent the previous spring in Italy, where heartless massacre of birds is carried on, one of the Italian's favourite dishes being half a dozen or a dozen tiny ones served on polenta. The sportsmen who indulge in the hunt sell the birds strung together—a thread through their heads—by the dozen. In Norway the birds are encouraged and petted, and in the winter fed. At Christmas time every one buys sheaves of oats or other cereals still in the ear, and hangs them outside the windows, or, fastening the bundles on poles, erects them in gardens and in the open spaces of the cities. He would be poor indeed who had not a few *ore* to devote to the entertainment of the little feathered friends at this season of universal joy.

Poverty as we know it in England is scarcely to

be found in Norway, and, on the other hand, riches as understood by a Norwegian living in his own country would by no means satisfy an aspirant for wealth on this side of the North Sea. Statistical information concerning income and property shows but a small difference between the principal classes. The income of the employer often does not exceed the wages of the average workman. A very slight change in the balance would bring many employers into the ranks of the employed. This happy country, though under the government of a Limited Monarchy, seems to fulfil the dreams of at least the reasonable Socialist. It has no nobility with political or economic principles, no great capitalists, no immense estates. The difficulty of earning a livelihood in the inclement climate and on the stormy coast calls for energy and endurance, and accustoms the worker to self-restraint. More than half the population own deposits in the Savings Banks. The spirit of equality is noticeable to the most casual observer. The proprietor of the station where you pass your nights is absolutely the equal of the guest, who avails himself of the house's hospitality for his own convenience, and apparently not for the profit of the owner. The servants who wait on one are pleasant and willing, working for

SÆTERSDALEN GIRL IN NATIONAL COSTUME

Norge

their living, it is true, but showing none of the servility largely dependent on tips which is the characteristic of their class in other countries. If a *pourboire* is given, small or large, it is accepted invariably with a frank handshake; in some cases it is difficult to induce its acceptance. A Norwegian, whatever his standing may be, is the equal of everyone. Politeness on the part of the traveller is such a necessity that the guide-books mention it. The domineering tourist will meet with difficulties and rebuffs.

MAINLY ABOUT SAINTS

CHAPTER V

MAINLY ABOUT SAINTS

Nico did a great deal of work in Dalen, finishing half-completed sketches, and making many figure-drawings. One of the servants was from Sætersdalen; and, to pose for Nico, she dressed herself in her extraordinary costume. In the course of our wanderings we met with travelling natives of Sætersdalen—once, under a lucky star, with a woman taking her little child, a girl of three or four years old, to a hospital in Christiania. Between us we persuaded the child to act as model for an hour or two, so as to give Nico occasion to transfer her decorative charm to his paper. The dress for women and girl children alike is a straight garment of very thick cloth, sustained by embroidered shoulder-straps. It reaches only a little below the knee, and is edged by two or three bands of very thick coloured cloth, which hold out stiffly the rather solid material of which the

garment is made. Under this they wear a petticoat made on the same model. A white shirt covers the arms and neck, and a brightly coloured knitted belt girdles the middle—I can scarcely call it the waist—of the wearer. On their hands are black mittens, embroidered in a traditional pattern with brightly coloured wools. The head is covered by a folded handkerchief, and the hair hangs loose or plaited down the back. The legs are encased in thick knitted stockings and sensible low shoes. The men and boys wear trousers that come up to their shoulders, and odd little round hats. The district in which they live we were not able to visit, to my regret. We had left it to the last, intending to take it on our way home, as the country can only be approached from Christianssand, a port touched by the steamers bound from Christiania to Hull; and at the last moment unforeseen circumstances compelled us to make our passage home as speedy as possible. There is a railway which will take the traveller up the valley as far as Byglandsfjord; but to appreciate its many charms it is advisable, and well worth while, to make the journey by road and water. Beyond this station the valley has no connection with other routes, except by rough and sometimes dangerous moun-

SÆTERSDALEN PEASANT GIRL

Fra
Sætersdalen

tain paths. Accommodation for the tourist is exceedingly rough, and food narrowly limited in quality and variety. On account of these drawbacks, the Sætersdalen district must certainly be, from many points of view, the most interesting part of Norway. There the traveller will find the dresses, the customs, and the dwelling-places in much the same stage as they have been for the last three hundred years, and—what is always a great attraction to me and surely not less so to others—there is the joy of travelling in parts which are as yet almost unknown, and consequently unspoilt by the tourist, who must perforce bring in his wake so many doubtful blessings. For me the people of a country is that country's greatest charm—not the townsfolk or the owners and staffs of the big hotels with their far-spreading influence, but the unspoilt people of the untravelled parts. In the summer months parties of people migrate from the valley and take up their abode in the mountains. Thus the courageous but too confident traveller may find himself unable to obtain even such simple food as bread and milk. It is highly advisable for the explorer to take with him biscuits, canned food, and brandy, and to travel with as small a quantity of baggage as is convenient.

At the head of the valley it is possible to cross the mountains which separate Sætersdalen from Telemarken and to arrive at Dalen, on Lake Bandak. The peasant inhabitants of Sætersdalen are of rather a charming primitiveness, and some of their houses can show wonderful specimens of quaint and grotesque carving. Included in this simplicity, however, is an unpleasant and complete disregard for cleanliness.

The moment came when, much against our inclinations, and especially against Nico's wishes, we were obliged to leave our comfortable quarters at Dalen. For the last time I basked in the warm sunshine which had favoured us during our entire stay; for the last time I retired from the too warm welcome to the shadowy balcony studio belonging to my room, which complaisantly looked north as Nico required. Only this once more should I drop sticks of chocolate on to the golden curls of the little Andrea as she came within range during her eternal roamings over the big farmyard in search of mischief. No fewer than ten cats of variegated colours prowled over this area; they delicately fished and fought for the more toothsome morsels from the barrel outside the kitchen window containing all the refuse of food

MOLDOEN.

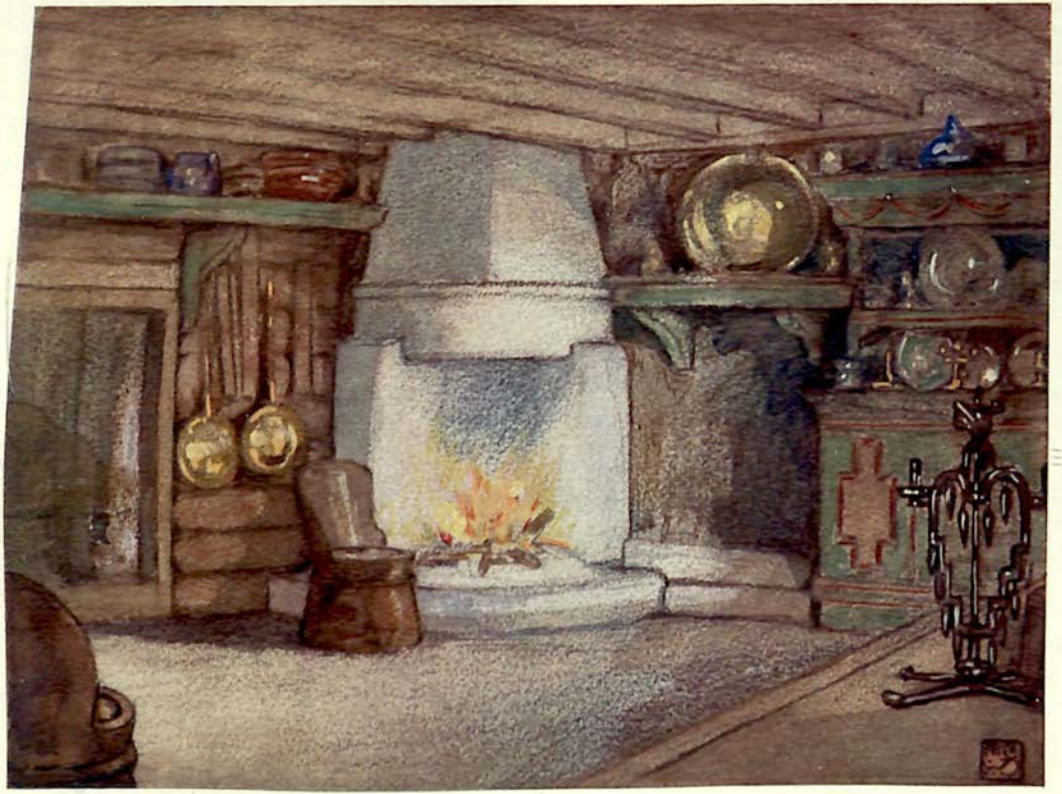
stuffs, the eventual emptying of which was to the advantage of the pigstye. In the middle of this interesting land was a well. Over it hung, high in the air, an empty bucket suspended by a chain from the lighter end of an immense pole. The pretty cowherd would fill the pail with water to plenish the tubs from which her charges drank. Most evenings, in a spirit of wickedness, the worthy brother of the golden-haired baby would fill the bucket and leave it standing by the well, the weight of the water in it keeping it on the ground. Up would come an unsuspecting cow, which thirstily would drink the contents. Slowly she would lift her head from the now empty pail, which, flying as by magic into the air, would almost invariably give the bewildered creature a smart blow on the head. Of course, it did not hurt the animal; but her expression of startled and grieved surprise was most amusing. It was one of the excitements of my days at Dalen to have mild bets with Nico whether the day's intended victim would be free of the bucket in time.

The sun went in; the air grew cold; soon darkness was upon us. This was the proudest moment of the day. I lit my fire, invariably with success, with peelings of birch bark that I had

sedulously collected during my walks. This last time all my savings went together — how they blazed! Then in came the farmer, our host, with his exceedingly easy bill, including entries for various delightful painted butter-boxes and three immense wooden drinking bowls which I had bought from him. Then followed his worthy wife and his pretty daughter, bearing a tray on which was a bottle of arac punch and four glasses—he wished to drink to us before we went, and so we clinked the small glasses, and in various words of various languages expressed that we were pleased with one another, and almost arranged that the pretty daughter should come with us to learn English and to help my nurse to look after my babies. I have not got little Andrea with me yet; but I expect that by the time this book is published she will be in my house, wearing her pretty national costume, and rejoicing us with her charming little face, which is reproduced on the frontispiece of the book.

Next morning we were obliged to be up by six. An hour beforehand one of the delightful serving-maids lit my fire, and our breakfast, including more arac punch, was brought upstairs. By and by, in the cold grey morning, we boarded the

A COTTAGE INTERIOR, TELEMARKEN.



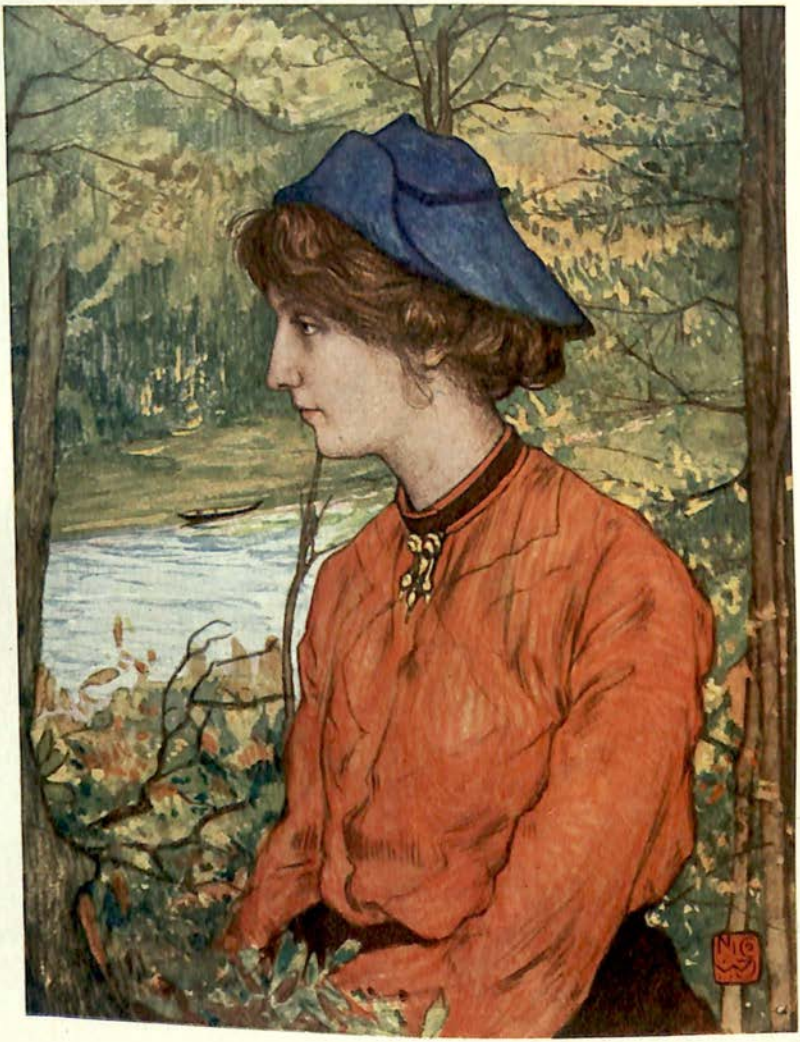
little steamer which was to take us through the series of lakes and canals to Skien, whence it is possible to go by train to Christiania.

It was a wonderful day, albeit very long. These days that one begins at six o'clock seem always of unnatural length—what should be luncheon time in the ordinary way is only breakfast time on these occasions; and, when all the hours are unoccupied, how delightedly one would welcome bedtime in the afternoon! However, before we had time to become very discontented, the sun came out to cheer us up, and then breakfast was announced, and after that we began to shake off our drowsy ill-humours and look about. Our captain was a good-looking man, quite young, and an excellent English scholar. He was a great traveller, and from his talk we gathered that he was not too well pleased to be passing his days on this little lake steamer, going backwards and forwards alternately with another boat; he was rather discontented at this time, quite the close of the season, when the English passengers that his soul loved were few and far between, and his most usual freight a few peasants, changing at every station, and an occasional herd of cattle. He pointed out to us on our right a group of rocks known as "The Monk

and Lady." I could fancy I did see a resemblance to two human beings, one kneeling before the other's uplifted hand, apparently asking for a blessing. Had I not known the name given to the group, I might have thought I saw the image of a guilty being receiving corporal chastisement.

At the first station we stopped at, the little boat rolled a good deal, and it was only by clinging to steadfast objects that the passengers preserved their balance. Several young men boarded the boat. Also there joined us two very beautiful women wearing long coats to cover their best costumes, their charming head-dress concealing hair hanging loose down their backs. They were both married women. Two of the young men had pockets full of beautiful yellow apples; they ate them steadily, by the dozen I should say, until the pockets were empty. I coveted the fruit. When I am an early riser, it is astonishing how my most extreme longing is for unattainable apples. At the next station several children came on board with baskets of the fruit for sale. Already my appetite had become fainter; but Nico bought the stock-in-trade of a person of some three or four years, and so much occupied was I in watching the exhibition of the boy's triumph over his less

A NORWEGIAN GIRL



fortunate fellows, that I did not notice the piling up of interest which was going on around me.

Really it was too much for one stoppage! First, the apple-sellers, who left us, however, before we started; next, a man with a foal two or three weeks old; also a herd of about thirty cattle, tied up variously on deck, in close proximity to the passengers; last, but not least, a Sætersdalen woman, in the full glory of her elaborate and brightly coloured costume. Walking in the fields in their own district, the women take off the dark cloth upper frock which this woman wore, and work in a grey underfrock made in exactly the same way. Here was material for heaps of excitement in our simple lives. When we had sampled our apples in the little deck-house which was all the covered accommodation, I left Nico half asleep and went out to look for adventures. The foal, with terrified eyes fixed on the water, was neighing piteously; every now and then a horse would trot to the edge of the water, apparently to neigh comfort to the poor little fellow making his first water journey. Frequently the boat would give an alarming lurch, and the cattle would slip helplessly from one side to the other, stamping and kicking in their efforts to regain

a steady footing on the slippery deck. Later, at Nico's suggestion, a board was put up between the pony and the water, and this seemed to quiet the poor beast. At the next station the boat gave a fearful roll, and tipped over to such an extent that the perfectly smooth water of the lake washed one side of the deck. We were all rather frightened for a few seconds. The cattle were in a sprawling, kicking, terrified mass on the side which leaned to the water. The passengers struggled to the opposite side, and held on as best they could. By some means the steamer righted herself, and off we started.

The captain was attentive to us on this trip. I think he was glad to air his English. He pointed out, on our right, another curious formation in the mountains, which he called "St. Olaf's Ship." I daresay in the time of St. Olaf ships were like that: so I will not emphasise my ignorance by criticism.

St. Olaf's name is found all over the country. It is well known that he is Norway's greatest saint; but I daresay his history is not such common property. Therefore I tell it as our captain on the steamer told it to me. Here I may say that there is surely no country in the world where the

KJENDALSBRÆ

average inhabitant has such an exceedingly great knowledge of histories, national or general.

Olaf Haraldssen was a descendant of Harald Haarfajer, or "The Fair," who was the first king to rule the whole of Norway. Harald Haarfajer flourished in the ninth century, and was one of the first of the heroic Vikings sung of in sagas. After Harald the Fair, the most splendid king was Olaf Trygvasen, who with his many followers harried us to such an extent that the English sovereign was obliged to sue for peace. He endeavoured to implant Christianity among his subjects by sword and fire, and, after making a heroic defence and losing nearly all his men, fell mortally wounded during a battle against the Swedish and Danish kings. Norway was now in the hands of the two conquering kings; but they gave up their shares to a powerful Norwegian earl, who had given them his aid against King Olaf Trygvasen. The earl agreed to hold these lands as their vassal. In this capacity he was obliged to leave his country when the Danish king called upon him to join in an invasion of England. He never returned from this expedition. In 1015 Olaf Haraldssen, another worthy descendant of Harald the Fair, returning from a pirating raid, seized the opportunity of

assuming the leadership of the country, determined to carry out the intention of his noble ancestor, Olaf Trygvasen. With the help of various petty kings from the north, he overthrew the dominion of the earls and their overlords, the Danish and Swedish kings. He made Trondhjem his capital, and there he received homage from the lesser chieftains as king of Norway. In his turn he enforced Christianity; but on account of the extreme severity of his policy he alienated many of his people, who sought the aid of the Danish king against him. Defeated, Olaf fled to Russia. After gathering his forces together he endeavoured to win back his kingdom, but was again beaten. He was killed at the battle of Stiklestad in 1030. His body was taken to a place called Nidaros, and buried on the banks of a river. A year later his corpse was exhumed, and it was found that there was no trace of corruption—the face was just as in life, and the hair and nails had grown. This, and certain miracles wrought through his intercession, caused him to be proclaimed a saint. His body was encased in silver and placed in Trondhjem Cathedral, where it received great veneration until the time of the Reformation.

The history of Norway, with its continual re-

A TYPICAL NORWEGIAN MAIDEN

lations and dissensions with Sweden and Denmark, is intensely interesting; but there are such splendid books on the subject that it would be ridiculous for me to attempt to introduce more than these few words into a book which professes to give merely the superficial impressions of a traveller—exceedingly interested, it is true, but—having almost everything to learn about her subject.

Rather regretfully, we came back from the eleventh century, for the captain was obliged to superintend the disembarkation of the cows. We were rather glad to get rid of them; and they, poor things, were, I am sure, heartily pleased that their startling journey was over, and that they found themselves safely on dry land, with plenty of space to roam in. The pony we kept with us for a while, attempting to persuade it to drink milk, which, however, it refused to consider.

The luncheon was pork and stewed rhubarb, served in a very small and stuffy dining cabin. Nico and I refused it, and regaled ourselves on a tin of Brand. Soon we entered the wonderful canal that joins the Bandak Lake to the Nordsjo Lake, which is connected by another canal with the head of the Skien Fjord, thus opening up an inland waterway from the sea at

Skien right into the heart of the mountains at Dalen, the extreme end of Lake Bandak. Lake Bandak is a hundred and eighty-seven feet higher than Lake Nordsjo, with which it is connected; this immense difference is overcome by no fewer than fourteen locks, the average rise in each lock being something over thirteen feet. All the locks are blasted out of solid rock and faced with grey granite. When we reached the end of this stupendous triumph of engineering, the effect as we looked back was overwhelming. The chief difficulty in construction was a fall of eighty feet, called the Vrangfos. No bottom could be found to the gorge, and a massive bridge of granite was constructed between the two rocky sides, on which foundation a dam was built. Five of the fourteen locks are at the Vrangfos, which rages alongside in impotent fury. This immense work cost the country three million kroner.

At the end of this canal is a rather pleasant little station, Ulefos, on the Nordsjo Lake; but we were in a hurry to get to Christiania and civilisation. We did not get off the boat, but continued on our way to Skien. We were still chatting with the captain. On our left in the rocks, he pointed out to us a yawning gap, ten or twelve feet high.

A BABY OF TELEMARKEN.

That cavern, he told us, was used as a chapel, and dedicated to Saint Michael. He also told us that it was the tomb of the last Catholic priest in Norway just after the Reformation. The King of Denmark, who at that time was also King of Norway, had decreed that the Catholic religion should cease to be in both Norway and Denmark. In Norway the people were all the more against the fulfilment of this decree as they recognised that the Danish king wished to enrich himself at the expense of the Catholic Church. Cunning as well as force, therefore, was necessary to establish the Lutheran religion in the country of St. Olaf. The Catholic priests were banished, and their places were taken by foreign preachers, who, to deceive the people, kept up for a long time the external appearances of Catholicism. Several years after these primary steps had been taken, a Danish soldier named Porl, cruel and fanatical, was appointed preacher to the church of Solum; the little rock chapel of St. Michael having been destroyed, the parish of which it was the centre had been united to that of Solum. Soon Porl discovered that his parishioners still went in great numbers to pray in the grotto, and sometimes at night a mysterious light was seen among the rocks.

One autumn evening, returning from Holden in a boat rowed by three young watermen, Porl beheld them suddenly cease their rowing, and, throwing themselves on their knees in the boat, cross themselves. This act of devotion was performed exactly opposite St. Michael's Chapel, from which the mysterious light reflected itself in the lake.

Furious, Porl ordered them to row him to the foot of the hilly path which led to the chapel; but here he met with determined opposition. They would rather die than obey his wish. He was therefore obliged to return to Solum, promising himself a speedy solution of the mystery. In such a matter he could not trust his parishioners, devoted as they were to the old religion: so he took into his service two men from Skien, and ordered them to keep watch from afar on the grotto of St. Michael. One night, the eve of St. Michael's feast, they rushed to him, breathlessly, to announce that they had seen the mysterious light issuing from the cave. There was no doubt about it. He could see it with his own eyes. He took a sword from the wall to arm himself against the unknown enemy, and his two spies rowed him to the grotto. As they got nearer the light became of more importance. His men took him to the foot of the

ROMSDALS HORN

steep narrow path; but neither threats nor hope of reward could persuade them, fearing the supernatural, to accompany him. Filled with anger, he made his way alone; but at the moment when he had all but reached the opening to the chapel the light went out, and there he was between heaven and earth in the pitch darkness, afraid to take either one step back or one step forward. Gathering all his courage, he went forward, and managed to feel his way into the cave. God alone knew what awaited him there, and on His name he called. At the sound, at the far end of the cave a big stone was moved, and the darkness was flooded with light. Porl could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw before him an altar, and on the altar a crucifix surrounded by innumerable candles. From this sanctuary a venerable old man, wearing sacerdotal vestments, as if about to say Mass, advanced towards him.

"You come in the name of God?" said he. "Come, then, in peace."

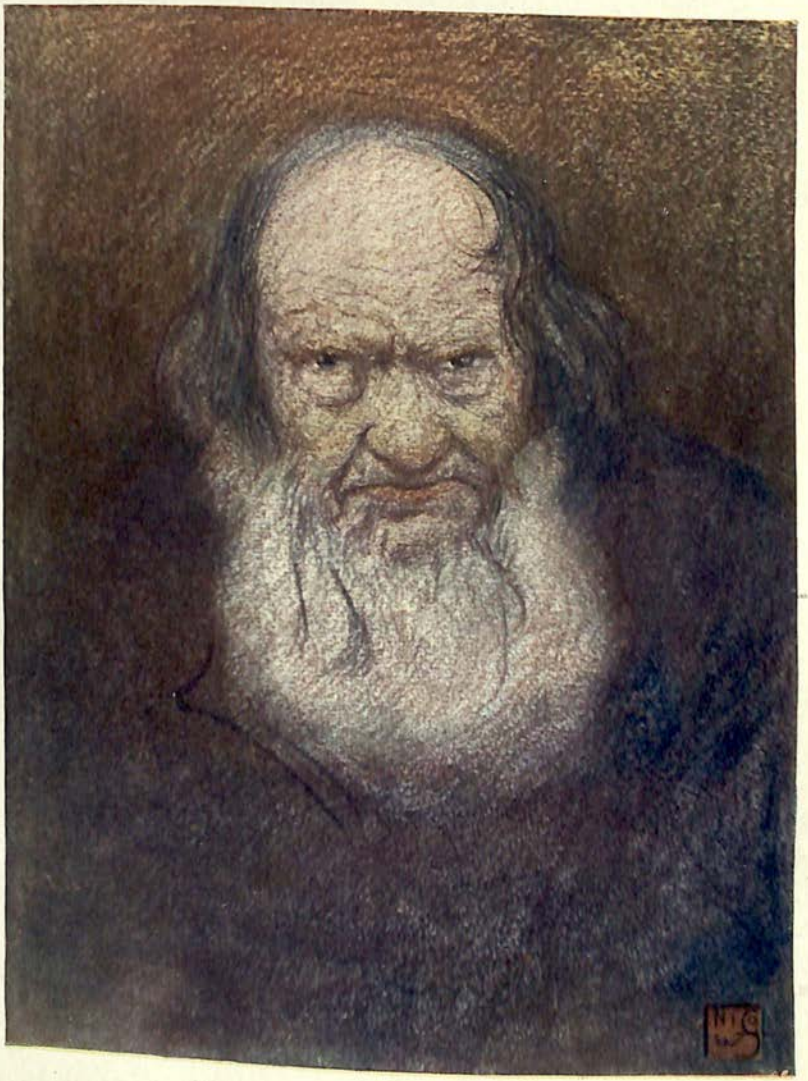
But the preacher, brandishing his sword, fell on the old priest, crying in anger, "I was right, then! I guessed that there was still an accursed Papist in my parish!"

"You were indeed right," said the old man. "It is he you are now assaulting."

"It is not you that I quarrel with," said the Lutheran, "but the error of your ways, and the black artifices you employ to turn the heads of my parishioners."

"Your parishioners?" repeated the old priest with dignity. "Do you know who I am? I am Sylvester, the legitimate pastor of those poor souls whom you call your parishioners, and the last Catholic priest left in this unhappy country. With cunning and force you have made war on the religion which has made Norway what it is. You have robbed her people of their faith; you have sacked our churches and banished our priests. Far from my flock, I have eaten my bread in tears and exile for long years; I have wept and prayed; almost have I died of grief at leaving my poor children deserted. But I could not die away from them. In spite of a thousand dangers, I returned and buried myself here in the ruins of my dear church. Only the inhabitants of one farm know of my return, and from them I receive the bread on which I live and the straw which is my couch. As for my 'artifices'—alas! I am old and incapable of doing anything for my children, who still love and

OLD AGE, TELEMARKEN



reverence the Church of their fathers. All I can do for them is to pray and to celebrate Mass for them on the great feasts under cover of the charitable darkness. These are my ruses, these my terrible mysteries. Now that I have told you them, raise your sword against the last of God's anointed priests living in my unhappy land. Strike—for I wish to die here."

The *ci-devant* Danish soldier was touched.

"No," he said. "God forbid that I should raise my hand against an old man. Live, and die when God shall call you, in this spot. Adieu, and may God enlighten you at your last hour."

"Amen," said the old man. "Both you and I have great need of the light."

Porl left. From that day he ceased to persecute his flock, who held still to their Catholic practices. A few more times the mysterious light shone from St. Michael's grotto, and the belated wayfarer who saw it piously crossed himself. But when Christmas came the cave remained in darkness. The last Catholic priest had died. The initiated farm people had made a tomb for their beloved pastor in the depths of his chapel; and there his body lies to this day, waiting for the resurrection.

The simple facts of the above narrative were given me by our captain; but for the complete and detailed history I am indebted to no less a person than the present Catholic Bishop of Norway—Monseigneur Fallize.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

CHAPTER VI

ARTS AND CRAFTS

We landed at Skien, and wandered about the town before taking train to Christiania. In the first place we went to a hotel and supplemented our day's diet of Brand by steaks that were really the best I had ever eaten, and by little rolls of delicious white bread, which was a luxury we had not had the chance of appreciating since we had left the Britannia Hotel at Trondhjem.

The town is very prettily situated, and has charming environments — of which the Nordsjo Lake, if it can be spoken of in such a way, is much the most delightful. From the town one sees it against the background formed by the Liffeld Mountains. It was on these heights that during the Franco-German War two French officers landed in a balloon. They had not the slightest idea of their whereabouts, and would probably have perished in the snow had not the presence

of an empty wooden match-box given them sure proof that they were in a civilised country, and probably within reach of human habitation. They sought hopefully for shelter, and were found by two woodcutters, who showed them such hospitality as was in their power.

Across certain bridges are "the islands," where may be seen many large wood-pulp and paper mills. The manufacture of pulp for making paper is an important and ever-increasing source of revenue to Norway. The pine timber is ground by powerful machinery into pulp. When the trees are first taken from the water which carries them hither from their various native forests, they are sawed into blocks about eighteen inches long; these are quickly passed on to workmen, who with drills extract the knots; the surface is then cleared of bark and dirt, and they are ready for the stones. In the machine the sides of the blocks are forced against rapidly-revolving stones, and are thus ground into fine powder, which in the volume of water conveying it to the draining machine is scarcely distinguishable, so fine is it, and so small in proportion to the bulk of water. After the draining process, which is accomplished by passing the liquid over fine wires, the sheets are taken

ROMSDALS WATERFALL

up by girls and put under powerful hydraulic presses; afterwards they are made into bales and are ready for market. These mills, and the many hundreds of others, are all worked by the immense water power which is one of Norway's greatest assets, though these resources are by no means fully utilised.

This knowledge, I may confess, is all at second hand. We did not devote any considerable time to Skien, but took the train on the day of our arrival.

While we were waiting in the station for the ticket office to open, which it does one minute before the time of departure, we were amused by the antics of two barefooted, very ragged, dirty little boys. They examined us pretty thoroughly in a rather furtive way: I have no doubt they had no business where they were and fully expected to be turned out. I held out a silver ten-ore piece in each hand, and with a good deal of embarrassed giggling they approached and took the tiny pieces of silver. Very gravely they each shook hands with me, and, walking right over to the other side of the station, performed the same ceremony for Nico's benefit. Then, full of importance, they walked up to the refreshment counter, and each

parted with five ore — about a halfpenny — for chocolates, and the other five ore for cigarettes.

At last the authorities allowed us to buy our tickets, and we got into the train, which, like most Norwegian trains, consisted of second-class and third-class carriages. In spite of the threats of the booking office, we were evidently in no hurry to be off; but in the fulness of time we moved, and presently slept. When we awoke—at least, when I awoke, for Nico insisted that he had not closed his eyes — we had arrived at Christiania. Allowing ourselves and our many paper parcels to be cared for by a hotel porter, we drove with him whither he would. It happened to be to the Grand Hotel, which is comfortable, and furnished with heaps of Sheffield plated candlesticks—to say nothing of a lift and other luxuries to which we had for long been unaccustomed. We were gently borne upwards to the floor where was the room which the hotel porter had decided we should occupy. We ordered an immense jug of thick chocolate, and after disposing of as much of this as we possibly could, we sought our couches, and slept amid electric lights and other modern luxuries.

Christiania is built on a magnificent site at the foot of pine-clothed hills which extend their pro-

THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT (STORTHING), CHRISTIANIA

The Storthing is convened every year, and is divided into an Upper House (Lagthing) and a Lower House (Odelsthing)

tection over the land-bound borders of the town. As one stands on these hills and looks over the town a delightful panorama spreads itself before one's eyes. Beyond the crowded houses stretches the beautiful Christiania Fjord, which, as it nears the town, breaks itself up into a thousand tiny fjords, and thus creates innumerable islands, which are chosen spots for the summer villas of the richer inhabitants of the town.

We stayed for some time in Christiania, a delightful town, full of life and movement. During certain hours of the day the whole population seems to turn out and walk up and down the fine road in which our hotel is situated, and I noticed that everyone seemed to be acquainted with every other.

We had here two good friends, one of whom was away during almost the whole of our visit; the other, a captain of artillery, did the honours of Holmenkollen for us during a delightful day we spent together. He called quite early in the day, and drove us up the hill which leads to the scene of the great *ski* competition every winter. All the way, on either side of the road, are villas, which, however, are farther and farther apart as the hill is ascended. Just before the big hotel on the left

of the road is a small lake; beyond this is the steep hill down which the ski-jumpers seem to fly as they take their leaps through the air. The record leap is a hundred and thirty feet. Of course, this sport is in the winter, when the ground is covered with snow and the lake is frozen over and capable of bearing on its surface thousands of spectators; on either side of the hill also the spectators are massed. Nico was present on one of these occasions, and declares that he had never witnessed such an inspiriting scene. Everyone was excited and happy; many of the crowd had come up from the town on their skis, or had dragged their little sleighs behind them, to skim down the long slope to Christiania after the festivities were over. The girls and the younger women wear short skirts and their hair flowing, and it is not resented as a liberty if one addresses fellow-sportsmen or women without the formality of an introduction.

The big hotel at Holmenkollen is a wonderful wooden structure, built by a Norwegian architect named Sverre, who is responsible for many buildings of the same character throughout Norway, but especially in Christiania and its neighbourhood. It is as far as possible in accordance with the

SKI SPORTS

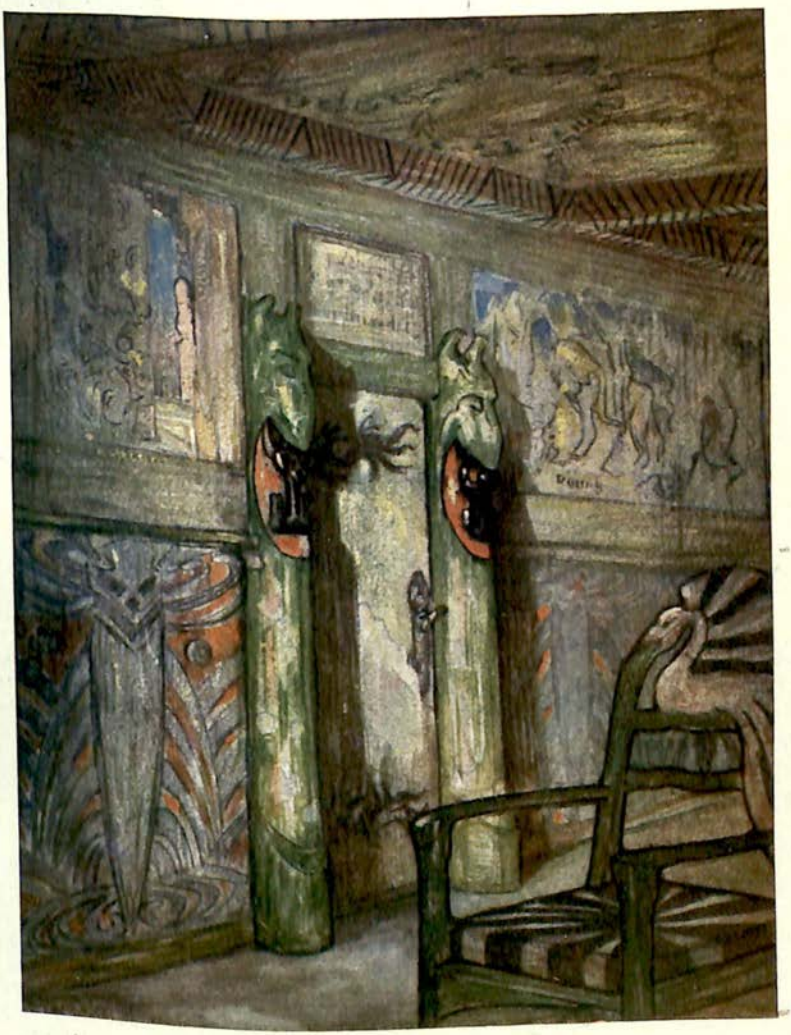
The Great Holmencollen Day outside Christiania

51

old Norwegian style of architecture. It contains many beautiful rooms, including two bedrooms furnished in Norwegian style with genuine old pieces of furniture. Then, there are various rooms reserved for the Committee or Royalty; the delightful smoking-room, with its splendid log-filled fireplace and its alcoves and corners; the magnificent dining-hall, characteristically decorated, its walls clothed with Norwegian tapestry of a singularly happy design. Architect Sverre collaborates with the great decorative artist Munthe, who is responsible for many of the adornments. Leading out of the dining-room is a singular little chamber, which is entirely decorated and furnished after designs by Munthe. In this strange room Nico ensconced himself to make a drawing which should give some idea of its quaintness. The wooden walls are primitively carved to represent various scenes from Norwegian fairy tales. The door is guarded by two grotesque monsters, and the chairs and small tables are of equally original shape and colouring. On the night of the ski competition the enormous dining-room is crammed with excited, happy parties, most of the tables having been engaged weeks beforehand, for it is a favourite resort for supper-parties on this night.

After luncheon on the autumn day which witnessed my one and only visit to Holmenkollen, we drove farther up the hill, and examined with much interest the exteriors and furnished interiors of various old Norwegian buildings which have been transplanted from other parts to this centre, in order that the Norwegian people may keep safely some relics of their olden days, of which they have lost many by fire or neglect. There are further excellent examples of their various periods of architecture to be seen at Bygdo, a small beautifully wooded peninsula on the west of the town. It is possible, and very pleasant, either to drive or to walk to that place; but we went one cold Sunday morning by a ferry steamer, which landed us within a few minutes of our destination. There was a tennis tournament going on the same day and in the same direction; it is evident that Norwegians are great enthusiasts over this game, as indeed they are over athletic sports generally. A committee have bought a large piece of land on this peninsula. They wish to gather a representative collection of old houses from various parts of the country. The chief building is "the people's museum." Though not an old building, it contains a most interesting collection of furniture, clothes,

ROOM BY MUNTHE AT HOLMENCOLLEN.



religious objects, and domestic utensils from all parts of Norway and of various dates. Surrounding it are such old buildings as the committee have already acquired. Most of the residents of Christiania are subscribers to this institution and have the right of free entrance. Near by is a small Royal villa called Oscar's Hall. It looks a delightful place, standing in its brilliant whiteness among dark pine trees. On the King's estate is situated an old *stavekirke*, one of the few which remain intact. It is built of logs, and has a species of balcony running almost round it. The interior is very dark; but when one's eyes get used to the semi-obscurity it is to be seen that the church is most elaborately and beautifully carved. All these pole churches date from pre-Reformation times, and were consecrated Catholic places of worship. Catholics are still few in Norway; but the old religion is spreading, and in Christiania itself there are three or four parishes that have each a church and a priest.

I should love to return to this interesting little peninsula some warm summer's day; but all my enjoyment was spoilt and the edge of my interest dulled by the extreme cold, for which I was ill prepared.

The Christiania Fjord being less influenced by the Gulf Stream than the fjords on the western and northern coasts, the winter is longer in Christiania than in many places farther north. Generally this piece of water is entirely frozen over, and the country is tightly locked in the arms of Winter from December until March; the snowfalls, untampered with by thaws, accumulate and cause gigantic obstructions. The cold, though much more intense than in the English climate, is more easily bearable than our milder winters. The atmosphere is dry and pleasant, and often the sun shines brilliantly during the short days, and the delightful sports of this season are innumerable. Skiing, of course, must take the first place. The skis are really snow skates. They consist of a pair of very long, but very narrow, strips of wood, very thin and elastic. In front they are slightly turned up and pointed. The correct length should measure a third more than the height of the wearer. The skis are attached to shoes, or merely to straps, set a little back from the middle of the strip of wood. The Norwegians are great adepts at getting about on skis. They make extraordinarily rapid progress over the snow, especially when it is neither too hard nor too sticky. They

SKIERS DRINKING GOOSEWINE

help themselves along and partly steer themselves by the aid of long poles. Sometimes a traveller on skis, becoming thirsty, will stop at a little unfrozen spring, and, lowering himself with wonderful cleverness until he lies at full length with his skis disposed just as they should be, he puts his mouth to the edge of the water and drinks. This is what is called "drinking goose wine," and I assure you there is a good deal of knack necessary both to get down and to get up.

Skating is another favourite sport, for which there are plenty of opportunities. Sledging takes the place of driving through the winter months. Another gloriously exhilarating sport is tobogganing, either alone or in parties. The leader steers his rapid progress with a stick. One may meet with an unforeseen obstacle, and the occupants may be thrown out head-first with a jerk; but the fall in the soft snow is not often serious.

The shops in Christiania are very good, and generally, to the stranger at least, very dear; but at the big fur store there I bought for a ridiculously small sum two of the prettiest little reindeer-skin coats, made by the Lapps, and as worn by the Lapps. I brought them home with great glee to my babies, but was nonplussed by my boy, who

absolutely refused to have anything to do with his after he had elicited by hundreds of questions that the stuff the coat was made of was fur, that fur was the skin of the reindeer, that reindeer were young and had mothers and fathers, and that his coat couldn't run about in the snow because it was dead, and at last, that it was dead because Loye had to have a winter coat.

When after some weeks I persuaded him that the reindeer would be much more sad if the coat was not worn, he consented to have it on; but only on condition that it should be slipped on over his feet. Both the little garments were a great success; but I am afraid that the children's nurse never quite approved them. I think she found it hard to get used to coats that had no hooks or buttons but were fastened with plaited leather strings, and she thought her charges looked rather *outré*.

Christiania has but one picture-dealer of any importance. From what we saw of the pictures there we concluded that Norwegian art on the whole is so intensely affected as to say absolutely nothing to the beholder. We met two art enthusiasts at luncheon at the house of an exceedingly clever friend of ours, who was and is one of the

GIRLS ON OVERTURNED SLEDGE, HOLMENCOLLEN

editors of Christiania's chief newspaper. These two were man and wife, and obviously it was the wife's opinion, on art at least, that dominated. Their greatest artist in Europe's eyes they scoffed at; scarcely would they admit that he was clever, beauty and success being two attributes which do not belong to art as they understand it. They belonged to the ever-increasing number of folk who, to appear original and extra-cultivated, refuse to see beauty unless it is expressed grotesquely or incomprehensibly. So insistent was this particular devotee that she carried us along on the wave of her heated argument out of our friend's dining-room through the cold streets to her flat, where she planted us in front of a picture by her favourite artist. It was dark-green and white in patches laid quite rawly on the canvas. "Isn't it wonderful?" she cried. "Now you must own yourselves vanquished!"

"What is it?" I asked, with tactless ignorance, after examining it long and patiently from as many different points as I could discover in the small room.

"What is it?" said Nico, with artistic licence, not moving from the spot where he had taken up his stand.

"What does it matter what it is?" the owner answered, turning on us with flashing eyes. "Don't you recognise the wonder of it? I myself had it for three weeks, loving it and admiring it, and asking myself how to hang it. The artist himself told me it must hang as you see it, and explained to me that it was a picture of a woman standing in the moonlight."

"But where does she stand?" said Nico. "And where is the moon?"

"At her feet," said the worshipper. "My friend is such a great artist that he reverses the natural order of things, subjugating everything to his art."

Surely all this is rather extravagant, and surely it is not *this* art that will live when the painter is no longer at hand to explain and to decide "which way up." It is a great pity that all these clever people—for the painter has immense talent, as is shown in his earlier work, and our two interested friends were evidently people of intellect—should be so extraordinarily perverted in their tastes. Norwegian art is comparatively young; but it has made great strides. It has produced Fritz Thaulow, who, though not recognised by the enthusiasts of the class I have described, can boast the admiration of all Europe; among many

OLD CANAL, CHRISTIANIA.

clever designers, the decorative Munthe; that rather morbid youth, Edward Munch, whose lithographs give evidence of the great things of which he is capable; and many other artists whose names, known and praised in their own country, are not of such widespread celebrity in this.

During the middle of the nineteenth century flourished the great painter of peasant life, Tidemand. A series of his work is to be seen in the King's summer villa near Christiania, and his paintings, while not, perhaps, among the masterpieces of art, are very useful and interesting as showing the peasant life of Norway, under almost every condition, at a period when the people still wore their interesting costumes and had not lost any of their old ways and customs. These pictures are reproduced in every form, and are to be met with in many books on Norway, and in very many Norwegian houses.

There are also in Norway painters who devote themselves to the beauties of Nature, with which their fatherland is so generously endowed. This school has produced many fine pictures; but it seems to be rather falling out of favour in these days of exaggeration.

Arts in which the Norwegians have excelled

since early times, and continue to excel, are those of weaving and embroidery. In these their nation shows an originality and charm, both of colour and of design, which are truly admirable. From as early as the twelfth century relics of cloths with figures interwoven are extant. One at present preserved in a church represents some of the months in allegorical pictures, and is evidently a fragment of a much larger piece which would include symbols of all the months of the year.

Examples of the history of picture-weaving become plentiful and important with the beginning of the seventeenth century. As with all arts of the period, this branch was principally dedicated to the representation of sacred subjects. Besides these there are many samples of purely decorative weaving, beautiful for their colour and quaint conventional designs, often geometrical, or a continued repetition of one or two very simple expressions of the form of a doubtful animal. The cultured Norwegians treasure these pieces of woven cloth, and hang them on their walls, or even have them framed. In the various museums are excellent examples of every branch of this art. To-day it is a very thriving industry. The weavers sit at an upright loom, and work in fast-dyed

SLEDGING BY TORCHLIGHT

wools with an immense range of colours. The design is exactly the same on both sides, and the article when finished will wear almost indefinitely. Large quantities of it are used for wall-covering, and I can imagine nothing more delightful for this purpose. Any design can be produced, and their great artist, Munthe, has made many drawings, especially for this manner of reproduction. Embroidery in Norway I find all the more charming because it is *not* very varied. In other countries embroidery does many things; but here the workers cling to their very beautiful old-fashioned lines, and fill them in with strongly contrasted colours, mixing silk and wool. Mittens, gloves, bonnets, cloth, and all conceivable articles are gorgeously embroidered for personal wear or for sale, and the Norwegians themselves are by no means the least enthusiastic buyers.

Work in silver is another of the nation's handicrafts. In all the towns through which the tourist travels he will find large and small shops devoted to the sale of silver or silver-gilt filigree work and enamel. When he has seen one such shop, he has seen all; for over the country the same enamelled salt-cellars and butterflies and spoons, the same fairylike brooches and other ornaments, are re-

peated. Indeed, I became as heartily sick of these rather pretentious ornaments as I was enthusiastically charmed with the peasants' jewellery of an earlier age, frequently made by themselves, and showing an attractive absence of the machine-accomplished finish of the modern jewellery. By expressing the presence of the something which lifts hand work above machine work, I do not mean that there is not among the original silver work evidence of the greatest talent in this direction. The embossed filigree work is truly admirable. Precious stones do not take any important place. A coloured stone here and there, more often than not false, justifies its presence by increasing the beauty of the ornament, and not only by adding immensely to the expense of the object. One of the most striking pieces of jewellery is an enormous round brooch or buckle, often as large as a small plate. Dozens of these saucer-like pieces of metal, highly polished, are suspended by links to the body of the brooch, shaking and glittering with every movement.

As for Norwegian wood-carving, words fail me to express my admiration for the bold and strong effects produced with wonderful skill and by very primitive methods. During the long winters

MAKING NATIVE TAPESTRY

Working a design by Gerard Munthe, the well-known decorative artist

the peasants labour, often with no other tool than penknives. Their broadly carved furniture, with the invariable circular design which is so prominent in their embroidery also, has a charm that I miss in the wonderful and delicate carving of the East. I tried hard to possess myself of a few such pieces of furniture—a very tall grandfather clock, a carved and coloured cradle, a sideboard, and a cupboard—but in vain. The peasant owners refused to sell—wisely indeed, for surely these things are more appropriate in their big yellow-painted log-built rooms than anywhere else. Other objects which I sought to obtain from various antiquaries were absolutely beyond the reach of my purse: charming as they were, the prices asked were ridiculously high. I suppose that the sums asked are special during the tourist season, and that Norwegians get what they want at much reduced figures during the winter months. The explanation of this is obviously the absence of any competition. Two or three big shops have a corner in such things.

In all our travels we did not come across any little shop of the type one meets so frequently in most towns in England and on the Continent. It must be admitted that in such a country as Norway to buy such things as the peasants may be willing

to dispose of necessitates a considerable outlay. For the joy of buying give me Italy, or Spain, or Belgium, all of which countries swarm with small antiquaries to whom the chance of a sale is too precious to be allowed to slide for such a slight reason as a difference between the price asked and the price the would-be purchaser feels inclined to pay.

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF CHRISTIANIA

FARM-HOUSES: WEDDING FESTIVITIES

CHAPTER VII

FARM-HOUSES: WEDDING FESTIVITIES

THE climatic conditions of Norway necessitate much expenditure in the building of a farm. On account of the intense cold of the winter, warm houses must be provided for the live-stock, and dry storage also is necessary. As a rule, nowadays the buildings on a farm are four, though in former times there were often many small buildings —notably the charmingly carved storehouses one still sees here and there on the farms, standing on round stones and piles some three or four feet from the ground, for fear of rats as well as for dryness. Of the four buildings usual on an ordinary farm, the main house is, of course, the dwelling-place, the size of which varies. A cellar the size of the whole area of the house is generally built under this for storage of potatoes and other necessaries. The buildings are almost invariably of logs dove-tailed together at the corners, painted inside and

out. Near this living place is another erection which contains the rooms for the farm hands, the laundry, and the winter supply of wood and peat. The third building is chiefly for the animals, and is divided into different compartments, of which some are devoted to the storage of farming implements, grains, etc. These outhouses are often built with two stories connected by an inclined plane of logs, up which the various vehicles of the farm are pulled to be housed during the winter months. The fourth building is the storehouse, built from the ground, in which are kept the household provisions and sometimes bedding and clothes not in actual use. Many of the most elaborate and ancient of these *stabur* have been bought by the State or by private persons for presentation to the various museums which devote themselves to the collection of relics of old Norway and try to reproduce both houses and churches of old times with as many of their original belongings and fittings as possible.

The farms surrounded by these necessary buildings are often many miles apart, and consequently social reunions are comparatively rare. In winter the snow-covered ground is traversed with great rapidity by sledges or on ski-shod feet, and, the farm work being not so heavy or so pressing as at

A VOSSE BRIDE

Vossebride.

other seasons, the country people give dancing parties on the slightest excuse. The music is primitive; but the hearts and feet are light, and food and drink go round in abundance. In summer all the residents on the farm are busily engaged in planting and gathering their small crops, cutting every available blade of the grass which is so precious and means so much to their supplies of milk and butter and cheese when the ground is frozen and deep in snow. Their method of drying the grass is rather strange. Tall stakes are planted in the ground at short intervals, and on these small bunches of grass are impaled. To facilitate the operation, the stake is capped with a sharp steel point. In this manner scarcely a blade of grass escapes the gatherers, and the drying process is much more rapid than it could otherwise be on these slopes. In summer the cattle, the goats, and the sheep are sent out to graze on the mountain slopes. In charge of each flock are two or three persons, generally girls. They spend their summer in tiny rough huts called saeters. Hearing of these saeters, I inquired by what means, if not by long and difficult daily journeys, the dwellers in them were provided with food, and how did the farm people obtain from the heights their daily

supply of cheese, milk, and butter? Simply enough: one end of a thick wire rope is fixed up on the heights; the other is attached to a post below. The rope traverses precipices, ravines, and raging torrents. With the aid of a pulley and a second length of wire of less thickness, one may thus transport buckets of milk, bundles of hay, and packages of all sorts. The operators at either end are warned by a whistle that their attention is required. We were told, by the people of a farm where we stayed, that a young man sending down a bundle of hay slipped, and, clinging to the wire, slid with fearful rapidity to the opposite side. Midway over the fjord which this wire traversed his fingers were cut right through, and he dropped. Fortunately, there had been spectators of the adventure, and he was rescued without further injury. In spite of the dangers, I believe the peasants often avail themselves of this mode of descent from the saeters to their homes. They are courageous. On our long drives through different districts of Norway, we frequently met with these aerial wireways; and always on the steepest slopes one could gain on foot one saw cattle calmly grazing on the scanty grass at angles which make a poor human being dizzy. How the great beasts

FARM-HOUSES BUILT OF POLES

can keep their foothold on the loose soil, almost as steep as the side of a house, puzzled me often; and how they can look fat and well-fed on the miserable supply of green stuff which is all they find in many districts is indeed a problem.

The devout Norwegians have a theory to explain the poorness of their soil. At the creation of the world the angels whose duty it was to scatter the soil forgot Norway. Seeing this, the guardian angel of the land made complaints to the Creator. What was to be done? Impossible to restart the whole of the creation for the sake of Norway. "Come, my little angels," said He: "look carefully, and perhaps you may still find a little earth." The conscience-stricken angels swept the floor of Heaven, and the little dust they found they gathered in their draperies and scattered over the Norwegian rocks. That is why, while Norway is rich in stones, she is poorly provided with soil. Even in many of the valleys the earth is plentifully bestrewn with big stones and boulders fallen from the mountains, and where there are small tracts without stones one frequently finds that the ground is so marshy as to be useless. That there is as much cultivated ground only shows what can be dragged from Nature by men endowed with

patience and industry. Round the fjords the fisherman chooses for his log hut a spot where his wife may feed a cow and cultivate a small plot of potatoes, while he devotes his life to gathering the hard and difficult harvest of the sea.

At the country fairs or other rare meetings of folks for one reason or another, the young Norwegians meet and court. The girl must be a good housewife and should be able to make bread, to spin, and, in short, be capable of almost everything, for in this country of isolated homes it is impossible or difficult to provide a substitute for the invalid or incompetent member of a family. Sometimes among the humbler classes the betrothed couple wait years for the completion of their tie, as it is sometimes necessary to await the demise of an older couple to obtain a dwelling-place. During this time the bride-elect spins and makes up the linen that will last her for life. The betrothed couple are allowed all liberty to see each other and even to journey together.

I have taken from a Norwegian paper an accurate account of wedding customs in the middle of the last century, and I am assured that, with a few exceptions, everything remains much the same to this day. The usages vary slightly in different districts.

The Norwegian writer has chosen Hardanger for his description.

When a young man of the people wishes to offer his heart and hand to the maiden of his choice, he does not accomplish the deed himself, but appoints as his spokesman *opordsmannen*, a man of consequence in the district, a relation if possible. Together they go to the house of the desired one's parents. First they interview the father, all standing. If the father agrees to consult his wife a good sign has been given, and the *opordsmann* seats himself. Settlements and dowry are discussed, and finally the girl herself is consulted. If she consents to shake hands with her lover the engagement is a settled thing. All seat themselves for refreshments, and the party drink healths out of the best silver mug. Without waiting for the ceremony, the young couple take possession of the best room; and they are looked upon as man and wife. The morning after the contract the bridal pair are served with coffee and food in their room by the bride's parents.

This interview is always on a Saturday. In Telemarken the mode of procedure differs slightly. The spokesman, after consulting the girl's parents, goes to her room, and drags her out of bed

and into the barn, where the suitor waits to receive her.

The mother of a friend once nearly had a very disagreeable experience. Her child's nurse was a Norwegian; the family were spending the summer in a hotel at Telemarken. In the night the lady's door was burst open, and in spite of protestations she was dragged out of bed by her wrists. Only the opportune arrival of her husband brought to light the fact that this violent attack was really intended for the courting of her nurse.

To return to the Hardanger bridal. Soon after this the nearest friends and relations are invited to the betrothal party, which is occasion for much eating and drinking, in about a fortnight. During the interval the young lover presents to his mistress a wooden box carved or painted by himself, and containing all the jewellery he can afford to present to her; and the damsel prepares for her gift to him embroidered braces and a belt. Though maidenly modesty refuses to acknowledge it, these articles of attire have been in preparation for many months. The saying goes that he who weds a girl who is "getting on" will have the best supply of braces and belts.

The wedding proper is usually in the summer.

Invitations must be given in person at least a fortnight in advance, and as far as possible on the same day, so that on comparing notes the guests may have no cause for complaint. These invitations are on a large scale. Everyone for miles round of the same social position as the bride's family is invited; so, of course, are all the relations of the happy couple. I am given to understand that caste prejudices are very strong in the country districts. If the child of a *jaardemann* (rich farmer) should insist on marrying into the family of a *husmann* (small tenant-farmer), the family of the rich farmer will refuse to have anything to do with the young people, or even to see their child again.

Preparations for feasting on an enormous scale are begun. Barrels of the native corn-brandy and a smaller quantity of cognac, together with kegs of mead and wine and abundance of beer, are provided to encourage the gaiety of the guests. Three or four days before the wedding the *klejvekjaeringer* arrive. These are eight or ten of the women friends of the family, who are invited to assist in the preparations and to attend to the guests during the feast. It is looked upon as a great honour to be invited in this capacity.

Cooking begins in hot earnest. Piles of cakes are made of rye and milk. Stalks of *fladbrod*—pancakes of a kind—are representative standbys. Mountains of bread and raw smoked meat are cut up. The ox and pig, which have been killed in anticipation, are made ready. Cylinders of butter, weighing from twelve to fourteen pounds, are placed at intervals on the board; the guests will help themselves, smearing their bread and cakes with it and then sprinkling sugar over.

Two days beforehand arrives the *kjogemester*. Each district possesses an official of that kind, who is paid for his services. He is chief steward and master of ceremonies. On him falls the responsibility of placing all the guests in the order of precedence. As if this were not enough for one man, he has also control over the drinks, and during the festivities is liable to be called upon at any moment to make various speeches in extemporised verse.

The day before the wedding the servants of the guests arrive. They are laden with presents, mostly of food and drink. They are shown into the *stabur* (storehouse), where the presents and wedding clothes are on view, given food and drink, and allowed to go their ways home.

COUNTRY GIRL, BERGEN DISTRICT

In the evening of the same day the party begins. At the time this account was written, all came in their national costume and wore elaborate jewellery; but now few besides the bride have preserved this costume, though in Hardanger it is certainly much more common than in other districts. The cap mostly seen is a small tight-fitting bonnet — black for married women and blue for girls. In parts where costume is worn this rule as to colour holds good for men also.

It is now the business of the master of ceremonies to direct each guest to the correct place at the table. The bride and the bridegroom sit at either end of the table, both in unmarried costumes.

When they seat themselves two shots are fired. The kjogemester, in verse, thanks the guests for their presence at the feast, and gives out the names of the various voluntary helpers, of the four best men, of the four bridesmaids, and of the fiddler and the drummer. The musicians give a sample of their skill and seat themselves at the festive board.

Early in the night the bridal pair retire.

Then, after more eating and drinking, the guests dance until the small hours. Sleeping accommodation is found for all—bedrooms for the older and

more respected persons, the barns for younger ones—and often a near neighbour's house shelters many.

In the morning at eight or nine o'clock the waitresses carry round food and drink to the sleepers, who then get up and eat and drink still more. The best men brush the bridegroom's clothes and boots and help him to dress, and in the storehouse the bridesmaids render the same service to the bride. The young couple are then on view, but only to the parents and those of the immediate circle, to the fiddler, and to the drummer. The bride stands like a queen in her picturesque dress, decked in a silver or gilt crown, often set with many stones and with red, white, and blue ribbons in her flowing hair. Her breast is covered with brooches and ornaments linked together by silver chains; and one may notice that from the centre jewel hang danglements like small saucers, the especial perquisite of the matron. Her fingers are covered with rings, and she wears a gorgeous silver belt and silver buckles on her shoes. The bridegroom wears knee-breeches and a silver cord round his hat, and the rest of his clothes are in keeping with this grandeur.

Then the drummer beats his drum and the

A VOSSE BRIDE

fiddler fiddles, and all the party crowd to the door of the stabur and receive drink from the hands of the bride. A squad of the men helpers lead the way to church. In former times the journey, if by land, was made on foot; but now the party drives. Occasionally the fjord too has to be crossed. One can imagine how romantic such a sight would be. The boats are long and broad. In the first one go the music, the bride and bridegroom, the attendant men and maids, and the parents of the couple. Before starting the master of ceremonies provides all the guests with brandy. Arrived at the church and while waiting for the pastor, who often comes from afar, the party adjourn to the nearest house, and drink. Naturally a crowd has collected to see the wedding. All who ask are provided with drink by the kjogemester, who has also to bid the bride's parents good-bye in her name and in verse.

The celebrant arrived, this ubiquitous official leads the way to the church. He is followed immediately by the drummer and the fiddler, who, however, drop out of line at the church door. The bride is accompanied by the four best men; the groom is attending the bridesmaids. At the church door the maids give the groom to his bride, who is treated in the same manner by the best men.

Then the marriage ceremony proceeds. The interesting pair stand throughout; the rest of the party are seated. At the conclusion of the ceremony all the guests make offerings to the parson and to the parson's clerk. When this important duty has been fulfilled the parson is offered wedding food and drink in a neighbouring house. In many cases he is presented with a bottle of spirits and more food. These he is to take home, that his wife and family may share in the feast.

The journey back is made in much rejoicing. Arrived, after more food and drink, the party dance; the bride performing first with her husband, and then with the best men, and so on through the party; dancing last with the drummer, who, as a final compliment, must kick the highest beam in the ceiling. For the privilege of dancing with the bride her partner tips the fiddler, and at the conclusion presents her with a small sum, known as cradle money, to be spent on the layette of the hoped-for children. Sometime during the wedding day the party is regaled with bridegroom's porridge, which is a paste made with flour and cream, stirred so quickly that the cream partly turns to butter. This indigestible mass is followed by more drams of spirits to the accompaniment of

A HARDANGER BRIDE.

music, and the master of ceremonies recites a toast to the honour of marriage in verse which would not bear translation.

While the youths and maidens dance the matrons work and gossip, and the older men have drinking competitions, won by him who manages to keep his senses longest. The bride and the bridegroom retire early. The others dance, eat, and drink, as before, into the next day. In the morning the servants of the guests arrive with buckets full of sweet milk, which they offer to the keeping up of the banquet. In return they are given beer, and their empty buckets are filled with wedding food. After this—at least, so it happened when this account was written—the pair seat themselves, and every guest in turn deposits a money present on a large pewter plate placed for the purpose. On each donation the giver drinks with the couple out of a large silver mug, which is kept brimming by one of the best men. Then is eaten the bride's porridge, which is a paste made of flour and milk, and not so great a luxury as the bridegroom's porridge, eaten the previous day.

The fun and feasting go on all day. If one may believe certain Norwegian paintings and engravings, fights are not infrequent. Next day all sleep, and

badly they must need to do so; during the day adieux are said, and the guests, after much pressing to the contrary, at last take their departure.

A week later the couple leave the farm and take up their abode in the bridegroom's house, whence the bride immediately pays a round of visits to her neighbours, who assemble the following day for more feasting at the new home. This is the end of the romance. Henceforward hard work and the bearing of many children are the lot of the Norwegian woman, varied but seldom by dissipation in any form.

I have not been able to discover how far this account of the marriage customs of Norway may be applied to the present day; but I am assured by the Norwegian friend who kindly helped me with the translation that in the isolated country districts such affairs still follow the course I have described.

At funerals there are celebrations of much the same kind. Although there is no actual dancing until after the return from the burial, drink passes freely. I am told by an acquaintance, who assisted at the funeral of one of his tenants, that the whole party were overcome by drink to such an extent that at the churchyard it was

MAKING "FLAD-BROD"—A COTTAGE INTERIOR

discovered that the corpse had been forgotten. The pastor was naturally indignant. He and the mourners had to wait in the snow-covered cemetery until the coffin containing the remains could be fetched. In districts far removed from a town the food and drink for a funeral party are generally ordered while the funeral subject is still alive. A friend, calling to offer condolences, was served with cakes, which she was begged to partake of on the plea that "the corpse herself made them." Many of the rich farmers order their own coffins and keep them in the stabur. In winter the ground is frozen so hard that it has to be blasted.

FORESTRY: REINDEER: LAND TENURES

CHAPTER VIII

FORESTRY: REINDEER: LAND TENURES

DURING my long walks while Nico was painting, I was refreshed and delighted by the abundance of wild fruit which I found everywhere, delicious little strawberries and large raspberries. Once, while I was greedily stripping a bush of raspberries, sitting at my ease on a rock beside the shrub, a large snake glided from under my skirt, and hid itself beneath the stone on which my feet were resting. I had a terrible fright for a moment. I have never discovered whether there are poisonous snakes in Norway. Every four or five years certain districts are infested by animals about the size and form of a guinea-pig. They swarm all over the country, and do a good deal of damage. Immense numbers are killed, and the race seems to die out, until, when a period of four or five years has elapsed, they appear again. I was told this by an English inhabitant, who could give me no

reason for this intermittent character of their presence.

The Norwegian horses take their pleasures sadly. When they are not working, and are set at liberty to feed along the strip of herbage, they are either attached by a short chain round one leg to a staple fixed in the ground, or, what is worse, their forefeet are linked closely together by an arrangement like handcuffs. To see the poor things trying to be frisky amid these circumstances is quite painful. Nico describes the movement which results as "hirpling." It is a cross word, I suppose, between hopping and limping, and is extremely expressive of what it is intended to represent. In the towns the horse's forefoot is tied to the wheel of the cart when the driver is obliged to leave it. What would happen if wandering musicians were to strike up an equine cake-walk, I tremble to think!

In a country of such scattered population, the keeping of the miles of road in good order is naturally a question of moment. On most of his drives the traveller will notice hundreds of little poles painted red, and bearing some kind of inscription, planted at short intervals. These signposts give the name of the farmer or landowner appointed

SNOW PLOUGH DRAWN BY EIGHT OR TEN HORSES

by the *lensmand* to look after and repair a certain area of road, which is also indicated on the post. I do not know whether the farmer or the careless lensmand is to be blamed for the terrible condition of some few of the roads over which we passed. On the other hand, the difficulties to be contended with considered, the condition of the chief ways is wonderfully good. Many of the roads are cut up inconveniently by gates, placed at quite short intervals. Every second minute one has to scramble off one's cart to open these obstacles; but I believe they are less for the purpose of causing trouble than for keeping some sort of control over the straying of the farm animals. All along the route one meets with curious wedge-shaped constructions of wood. These are the snow ploughs. When they are needed, as many as six or eight horses are harnessed to them, and slowly they force a passage through the deep snow. I think they can be used only at the beginning or at the end of winter, though I am not quite certain; but why should people use ploughs when winter transit is entirely and most conveniently accomplished on sledges and skis? The deep valleys which are generally a feature on one side of a Norwegian roadway are levelled with drifts of snow, and it

is only when spring comes that the road may be tracked by the heads of the ten-foot poles planted along the path, which begin to show themselves only as the thaw sets in. What a lonely, mysterious journey for the solitary postman!

Somewhere in the neighbourhood of Odde lives to this day a postman who had a terrible adventure in the snow. The history of it was told me by a man who drove us for days along the road across Norway between Odde and Christiania. In the winter in the farming districts letters are delivered only once a week—perforce by the postmen on skis. I gathered that the day of delivery is not absolutely certain, and the man is sometimes days on his trip. The postman in question set out, as usual, alone; half way to his destination he sank into a snow-drift on the side of the mountain. In a day or two, when his continued absence was remarked, search-parties of thirty or forty men set out to find him. Of these searchers my driver was one. With them they took his coffin, expecting indeed to find him, but resigned to the certitude of finding his dead body only. Before the third day was over they sorrowfully gave up the search, and returned to their homes to wait until spring should force the secret from the snow. At the

FISHING THROUGH THE ICE ON CHRISTIANIA FJORD

end of the third day, a feeble, white-haired man staggered into the station, and fell fainting to the ground. For three days the postman had been buried alive, and at last, by dint of digging with his post-horn, he had got free. The rescue party had passed over his very head, and he had heard them speaking of him and finally deciding to give up the search; but of course it was impossible for him to discover himself to them. Imagine the joy of the community at his return! You may be sure he was well nursed back to health; and still, summer and winter alike, he carries the mail-bag over his allotted route.

It is obvious that the winter is in Norway a time of enforced cessation from farm work. With the exception of a certain amount of labour connected with the cattle, there is little to be done for several months. The men pass most of this quiet time in carving wood and making various articles out of birch bark. The women spin for their household needs, and knit and embroider what may be called fancy goods in expectation of the tourist season. The large shops buy up enormous quantities of the peasants' winter work, and each of the posting inns is a small centre where the peasants of the neighbourhood endeavour to get large prices for

the products of their winter industry—prices which dwindle through the summer as the days become shorter and the tourists fewer. It must be admitted that they are extraordinarily clever carvers; and they have a rather primitive method of painting their wares which is very decorative and, when it is not too well done, quite attractive. Their nicest carving they keep to themselves: witness the delightful fairy-tale animals which form the handle of the family mangling-board, and the equally charming monsters which seem to perch on the arms and backs of chairs.

A word on their primitive method of mangling may not be amiss. Two utensils are necessary—the first a kind of rolling-pin, round which the sprinkled linen is tightly swathed. The other, a mangling-board, a narrow flat piece of wood wielded by the picturesque handle I have described, is then pressed tightly on the linen and rolled with as much force as possible. I do not really believe that this operation can, even with great strength, make very much difference to the condition of the linen; but the process is much more interesting to watch than the working of a civilised mangling-machine.

It is in the winter that the work of a forester is

at its height. The felling of trees begins late in September, and is continued under many difficulties and hardships all through the winter. As the large forests are often at some distance from populated areas, the woodsmen build themselves log huts. They fill up the crannies between the logs with moss and turf, but on the roof they lay first a covering of birch bark to keep things close and dry. These huts are warmed day and night by a wood fire, which is always kept burning; on this they make their tea and coffee and do what little cooking they may need. I could not discover what happens to the poor horses that help the woodsmen in their labours. Do they share the hut with their masters, or do they sleep as best they may outside in the cold and snow?

The trees are felled, the branches lopped off, and the trunks stripped of their bark, which is kept and applied to many useful purposes. They are then gathered together where it is most convenient, and when the snow becomes deep enough they are dragged or slid to the nearest practicable waterway. I believe that it is at this stage that the owner, or his representative, marks the timber for recognition. In many cases the owner of the forest sells his felled trees to a

merchant, and it is here in such a case that the wood changes hands. In spring, when the ice-bound rivers begin to thaw, and the melting snow swells them in force and volume, the logs are carried by these torrents to the main river. During their journey hundreds of logs get stuck here and there, sometimes lying crossways between the banks and damming the river. The river drivers have their work cut out to obviate this happening, and, if possible, to be rid of it after its event, for to such a stoppage may be due most dangerous floods, and many accidents, when the immense mass of logs, stopped in their eager passage, at last are free. Sometimes the logs are chained together and sent down in rafts; but more often each one pursues a separate course. If they are jammed, the river driver, with the help of his long pole, must balance himself as best he can on the logs, as he springs from one to another, poking and prodding till at last he loosens the mass; and how to save himself is the question of the moment, for a risky calling is that of the man who endeavours to direct the logs in the way they should go. Sometimes, when the danger appears great even to these hardy Norwegians, accustomed though they are to risking their lives

FISHING-NETS AT SUNDALSOREN

daily, the man whose duty it is to discover and cut the log which is probably causing the whole stoppage is put into a kind of harness and attached by ropes to both banks of the river, so that when the whole mass rends itself free he may be lifted directly above their violence and so drawn into safety. As it is bad for the wood to lie through the summer, it is important that all this work should be done completely and with regularity. If it is a dry season, the logs will be left high and dry, and be liable to crack; on the other hand, one may often see logs lying at the bottom of deep water so saturated that they cannot float. All this timber is a great source of wealth to the country. It is used enormously for fuel, for fencing, and in building. Immense quantities are exported in the raw; others are prepared for use in the form of doors or window frames; there is even a certain market for complete log houses of various sizes. Naturally, in such a country, one meets frequently with saw-mills, and here the countless cataracts are found useful in supplying motive power. It is surely strange, all these things considered, that so little discretion is exercised in the felling and planting of trees. Although of late years, I believe, the

Government has bestowed a good deal of attention on this question, so much of the forest land is in private hands and beyond surveillance that on the whole sadly little care can be taken to prevent the ill-treatment of the forests. It is acknowledged that there are many tracts of bare land which within the memory of living man were thick forests. In several districts wood is too scarce to be used for fuel, and consequently the inhabitants are dependent upon peat. Bogs are to be found all over the country—on the lonely tablelands as in the inhabited valleys. These bogs are generally moss lands, and, in the north particularly, they contain thick strata of decayed matter from the luxuriant forests of former days. The digging and cutting of splendid peat is one of the smaller industries of the country. It is thought that it will become of much greater importance as peat more and more takes the place of wood as fuel.

In other times there were thousands of acres of common land in Norway. The difficulties which this places in the way of a complete utilisation of the soil have led to attempts by the local governments to partition the common land among responsible owners; but there are obstacles, and in many cases the ground is shared by several farmers.

THE MIDNIGHT SUN

On the private property of many large farmers a feudal system of a kind is very much in vogue. Almost the same method is found on the Italian *podere.* Dwelling-places are built on the estate, and together with a greater or lesser plot of land, and under certain conditions which differ in various districts, are leased to a class of farm-labourers called *husmaend.* These men have certain rights of grazing on the farmer's land, and in addition to the rent, which is exceedingly small, the farmer has a right to their services during a certain time of the year. Superior to these husmaend are the *placemaend,* who own their houses but lease a certain amount of the farmer's land.

In the south-east of Norway the cultivation of fruit is carried on to a large extent. In favourable years peaches, apricots, tomatoes, and even grapes, are grown in the open air; in the north, on the mountains, the summer warmth is insufficient for even hardy plants.

Rye and oats are the most important cereals. They flourish and ripen amid harsher conditions than other grains can endure. Rye is the chief bread cereal of the country. A large area of ground is devoted to the cultivation of a mixture of barley and oats which is known as *mangcorn.* Experience

has shown that the two grains planted together produce a larger crop than they do when planted singly. Besides being used as a human food, it is also a fodder for cattle, and a peculiarly excellent means of fattening swine. Berries are found growing wild in abundance in most of the inhabited regions; but vegetables play a very unimportant part in the feeding of the peasant.

The Norwegian horse, while not remarkable for beauty or carriage, is an exceedingly useful beast. It is hardy, gentle, and very active. On the Norwegian roads, which are in some parts very bad and in other parts merely rough bridle-paths, it cannot be surpassed. In Lapland, as everyone knows, the horse is almost entirely superseded by the reindeer. These are indeed a source of profit to their masters. From them the Lapps obtain their milk, cheese, peat, and the skin from which a good deal of their clothing is made. The small sledges which the reindeer draw are usually for one person. They are made of skin and are without shafts. The reins are tied to the horns of the beast, and this is all the control the driver has over the animal. Occasionally the reindeer is vexed and turns on his master, who saves himself by rolling out of the sledge and covering himself with it. It

is a wonderful fact that a well-trained reindeer can run down the steepest hill without once coming in contact with the vehicle behind it, though there is nothing in the world but its own cleverness in covering the ground in a sort of zig-zag movement to prevent constant bumping and collisions. While young reindeer are being trained in the way they should go, a big buck animal is fastened to the back, to do nothing but pull against the other continually. This animal lives almost entirely on the moss, its natural food, which in the winter it scrapes out from under the snow with its strong hoof. Many Lapps keep a thousand or more head of these deer. They herd them together with the help of their clever dogs. Sometimes during the winter a family of these tent-dwellers descend upon districts more favoured than their own, and I believe the immense flocks of reindeer do untold damage in the forests. Besides clothing themselves in the skin of the reindeer, the Lapps make from it many objects for sale in the towns. Shoes and coats in the Lapp style, and all sorts of small articles, such as boxes, bags, knife-handles, in the fur, are produced by this people. I came across a very old book which—in an account of a visit to Norway—gives a short description of a meeting

with some Lapps. I imagine that much of it may stand as if it had been written to-day.

"We accordingly provided a supply of drink and eatables; and, with a guide and an interpreter, set out on horseback. After travelling about forty hours, without seeing either any people or the road, we pitched our tents, at night, near a wood, with a part of which we made our fire. At length we met a family of about twenty persons, with their wives and children, who cordially saluted us, and we all shook hands. We shared out tobacco and brandy among them. They conducted us to their huts, and gave us dried reindeer flesh and milk.

"Their countenances are a miniature resemblance of the Calmuck faces; they are diminutive in size, and to appearance wretched; sufficiently generous, but full of uneasiness. They suffered us to go about everywhere, and do as we chose; and they readily showed us whatever they had. We were soon as intimate as if we had been born among them. Their language is very harmonious. A herd of about thirty reindeer strayed around. Our interpreter, who, by the bye, knew but little of their language, contrived to let them know that we wished to proceed onwards, to visit a few

MUNDAL, FJERLAND, SOGNEFJORD

families of their people, by means of a carriage with reindeer. Immediately they harnessed a sledge for us; but it went very slowly, as no track in the snow had been previously beaten down. We arrived at a tribe who were all brothers and sisters of those we had quitted. Their huts were formed of large poles of wood, and set circularly, covered with branches, moss, earth, and reindeers' hides; they have holes for the smoke to escape and another hole made in the ground. We stayed three days with these people. In the middle of their huts a stove is placed, on which they make their fire, all sitting round it. Their clothing is made of deerskin, similar to a shirt, and tied about the loins with a cord. We saw some, however, dressed in linen, for which they had made an exchange of skins. These people, whose manners and habits are well worth observation, seem to enjoy the freedom of their way of life. They have no words in their language which express the ideas we attach to king, prince, governor, laws, rights, etc. We presented them with a few trifles, with which they were highly delighted, and took leave of them, to continue our route to Tuffendalen, where, after eight days' dragging, we at last found good boor-cottages. Whether the Laplanders

indirectly belong to any regular constitution, or contribute anything to it, I cannot tell; but I remarked that, generally speaking, like the poor Indian of Pope, they have no artificial wants; and thus far, at least, they appear contented. The whole of this tract of land is solitary and desert. The superficial and level extent of it may comprehend a thousand and eight hundred square miles. *Laplander* is with them considered as a term of reproach, or a mere nickname; they call themselves *Samalatzes.*"

Since I wrote about the restrictions on the shooting of wild animals, I have learned that, whilst only one elk may be shot during one year on any estate, the owner of the estate may mark his ground for the purpose into certain divisions, and by paying a slight increase on his licence has thereby the right to kill as many elk as he has these partitions of his land.

While wandering in the forest, a Norwegian friend was attacked by a bull elk. Having no weapons and considering prudence the better part of valour, he climbed an adjacent tree. Not to be baulked of his victim, the elk had recourse to the extraordinarily brilliant idea (for an elk) of gnawing away the roots of the tree. For eight mortal

hours the object of his endeavours sat on the top of the tree momentarily expecting its fall and his destruction. At last the elk turned his attention for a time to food, and on this quest he absent-mindedly wandered away, leaving my friend to scramble down and be free. I should imagine there was an elk hunt next day on that estate.

Inhabiting the innumerable small islands on the south-west coast of Norway are a race different from the land dwellers, with whom they have no communication. They are miserably poor, and live in abominably dirty huts on the barren land which is their heritage. Among these islanders consumption and leprosy claim many victims. The spread of leprosy is due mainly to the uncleanly habits of the people. They eat very little meat with the exception of pigs' flesh. The pigs feed on anything they can pick up, which resolves itself chiefly into the rotting remains of fish. The name given to them speaks for itself—"fish pig." Once a year, in the families that can afford it, such a pig is killed, and on its flesh they depend for their meat for months. It is not to be wondered at that such food, combined with their unsavoury habits, produces such terrible results. Statistics seem to show that leprosy has been growing less

prevalent since the middle of the last century; but it is still necessary to keep several hospitals for the lepers.

Another remarkable fact gives rather an interesting example of the evolution which must follow on any abnormal conditions. For hundreds of years these people have had no opportunity of duly exercising their lower limbs, which are in consequence short and undeveloped; while the extraordinary muscular development of their arms and shoulders is not astonishing when one considers that all their transit exercise must be done by rowing. In consequence of this, and perhaps also on account of the consanguineous marriages, many of the inhabitants of these islands present extraordinary appearances.

FISHERIES: THE LAPPS: RELIGION AND MORALS: MUSIC

CHAPTER IX

FISHERIES: THE LAPPS: RELIGION AND MORALS: MUSIC

ALTHOUGH most Englishmen with any knowledge of Norway have been originally attracted to the country by the hope of sport, especially of salmon fishing, and though the rents which they are willing and eager to pay for rivers or sections of rivers are a substantial sum brought into the country, the sea fisheries are, of course, of immeasurably greater importance.

The old sagas tell that over a thousand years ago "splendid painted ships, with sails of several colours," sailed laden with fish to England, and the abundant and varied supply of fish which distinguishes the coast of Norway has always been one of the chief sources of the country's income. In 1897 it was estimated that the total receipts of the trade amounted to about sixty million kroner. The coastline of Norway is exceedingly long; in many places it slopes down to great ocean depths.

These various depths and the different conditions of the submerged surface determine the nature of the submarine fauna, and consequently of the fish. Perhaps the most important of these are cod, herring, and salmon. Cod are principally fished for in March and April, with lines and nets. The Lofoten cod fishery is carried on from several stations, spread over various islands. Here are the warehouses and the very primitive dwelling-places of the fishermen. The cod are caught with lines and with nets, which are baited with herrings or little metal fish whose gleam serves equally well to deceive the cod in search of food. At the favourable spots in the right season, the fish are so abundant that the fisherman has only to throw the line and pull it out again to find that a fish has bitten and thus closed its career. The spoil is taken ashore, split open, attached two and two together by the tail, and thus hung over long lines to dry. The liver is used for the fabrication of cod-liver oil, a medicine whose unpleasantness is more than equalled by its excellence as a remedy. The heads of this profitable fish are used for manure. In these cold regions, where grass is scarce, the cod heads and herrings are used as fodder for cattle.

FISHING-BOATS AT LOFOTEN

During the season fishermen from all northern Norway flock to the stations. Sometimes as many as five or six thousand fishing boats, with a total crew of thirty-two thousand men, are gathered together. The catch averages thirty-five millions; and the fish are usually sold by the hundred, generally prepared either as "klip fish"—salted and dried—or as the evil-smelling *torfisk* (stock fish), which haunted our wanderings through Holland, which imports large quantities. In old fishing laws of the islands it is insisted that no torfisk should be hung up after April 12, or taken down before June 12. I presume that after this treatment they will last and be odorous for ever. In the off-seasons small cargoes of this fish are carried by many of the passenger steamers, to the profit, perhaps, of the captain, but to the intense displeasure of the passengers. Indeed, all down the coast of Norway we noticed that the air was impregnated with the smell of stock fish; our towels and napkins, and indeed everything we had washed, had the same repulsive odour.

Though the financial side of it is very satisfactory, this industry costs the country much in lives of men. The great enemy of the fisher-folk are the violent tempests which spring up suddenly in the

Vestfjord. Often the boat is overturned, and the occupants cling as best they may to the various iron rings and chains. Often they drive their knives deep into the wood of the boat and hang on thus as long as they are able. Though there are lifeboats permanently attached to the stations, the greater number of fishermen lose their lives in pursuit of their calling; and after the tempest dies down, and the wrecks are washed ashore, often the clues to the number and identity of the poor drowned owners are the knives still planted in their boats. Nowhere are widows and orphans so many as on these coasts of Norway. During the fishing season the sale of intoxicating liquor is prohibited by the Government.

The herring come next in importance to the cod. They are variable in quantity, and in some years are almost altogether absent. The fishermen insist that there are "herring periods," with years good and bad. Such periods are said to last for about thirty years. During recent times such a period seems to have set in. The herring season is very short. Suddenly, as if by magic, the sea swarms with fish, which after a time disappear as rapidly as they came. To a certain extent they may be relied on twice a year—for the spring fishing off the south

A LITTLE SÆTERSDALEN PEASANT GIRL.

Lillebeth.
Scheel
Norway

coast between Stavanger and Bergen, and early in winter off the northern coast between the Romsdal and Tromso. This is called the "large herring fishery," from the greater size of the fish in these parts. Besides this, fishing goes on in a measure at all times of the year. The herring are caught either by going out to sea in search of shoals; or by lying in wait for them in the small bays and fjords, preventing their escape by arrangements of nets, and baling them out at leisure. In the open sea they are also caught with nets, and are more to be relied on as to quantity.

When a shoal of herring arrives, always announced by whales and flights of birds who feed on the small fish, telephones and telegraphs are set in motion to summon the fishermen to the spot, and to order barrels and salt for the packing of the fish. These are sent as speedily as possible by special steamers. When the shoal approaches the coast, an immense net encloses it as completely as possible. The fish are massed so compactly that a boat crossing the shoal is raised by them. The brilliancy of their scales as they dash about, almost on the surface of the water, is dazzling. Landed, they are immediately split open, cleaned, salted, and packed for transportation.

Whale fishing is carried on to some extent off the north of Norway. On the little island of Skaaro there is a building where whale oil is prepared for use. From afar off the sickening smell announces the industry of the island: repulsive morsels of greasy *débris* float on the surface of the water. At the landing place the rocky beach is so covered with grease that it is difficult to walk without falling. A friend arrived just as a whaler appeared on the horizon, dragging after her the carcase of an enormous whale, weighing seventy-five thousand kilogrammes. Such an animal will give about fifty thousand pounds' weight of oil, and will bring the captors between £280 and £300. Such a giant requires for his daily meal twenty or thirty tons of fish. To take them he opens his jaws, and closes them on water and fish alike; he swallows the fish, allows the water to filter through the curious formation of his mouth, and then squirts it up like a fountain through an opening in the skull. It is this jet of water which often causes his ruin, by indicating his position to the watchful whalers. On the boat which is chasing him is a cannon, loaded with an enormous harpoon, which is attached to the ship by a long rope wound round a pulley. The ex-

BUERBRÆ, ODDE HARDANGER

tremity of the harpoon is armed with an explosive bomb. When the whale appears the harpoon is shot at it. Following its instinct of self-preservation, it dives deep. The rope gives out rapidly. When it is entirely unwound it naturally pulls against the harpoon, the forked ends of which, in the resistance, tear the flesh of the animal. As a final result the bomb bursts in the body of the whale, and generally wounds it mortally. The corpse floats on the surface; it is attached to the boat and towed to the station, where it is cut up. The fat produces a large amount of oil; the whalebone is a productive article of commerce; and most of the remainder of the animal is converted into manure.

It is on account of the great importance and interest which we in England attach to the salmon fishing that I do not dare to deal with it, except to make an apology that any book on Norway should be without at least a chapter on this splendid sport. Though the accomplished angler is allowed to relate fish stories without interruption from an absolutely incredulous audience, the remarks of an inexperienced outsider would, I fear, not be received with equal docility. I am sure that an angler is born, not made; for, though I am ignorant

on the subject, all my life I have listened to enthusiastic fisherman's talk, and was brought up in a nursery in which were "skied" various victims of my father's prowess as an angler.

Since the beginning of my book I have learnt so much about the Lapps that I must enlarge on my borrowed history of them in Chapter VIII. The Lapps are nomadic on account of their reindeer, and it is following these animals where they choose to roam in search of food that takes them wandering all over the northern half of Norway. There are only two Lapp villages—Karasjok, in Finmarken, and Kontokeimo, near the Russian frontier. The permanent residences consist of cabins built of turf, stones, or small tree-trunks. These huts are round and have one opening in the top, where the light penetrates and the smoke comes out. In the middle of the hut a fire is kept continually burning, with a big cauldron hanging over it, suspended by a chain. The members of the family and their servants, if they have any, sleep on either side of the fire. The Lapps are small, in great contrast to the Norwegians of this region, who average over six feet in height. The children are often exceedingly pretty; but they soon lose their charm and become ugly, and are

A LAPP MOTHER AND CHILD.

a Lapp Mother

not rendered more attractive by their dirty habits. All their garments are made of reindeer skin, and the women add to these various silk shawls and handkerchiefs brightly coloured; by the quantity and the quality of these one may judge of their rank and richness. The Lapps are supposed to share a common origin with the Magyars of Hungary, though these, if they recognise the relationship, cannot feel flattered. It is certain that the Lapps were the first inhabitants of Norway. In appearance they are unprepossessing. They have small eyes, very low foreheads, flat noses, and thick-lipped mouths. Like the Hungarians, they are incredibly proud. They despise everything that is not Lapp, and refuse to allow their daughters in marriage to Norwegians. (I should have thought that the Norwegians would not have worried much about this restriction.) They are all baptized in the Lutheran Church; but that is as far as their religion goes in most cases. They are unmoral and superstitious.

One might gather from the books of some of Norway's great writers that the nation is on the whole rather casual about morality. It would appear that their religion, while condemning as

worthy of hell quite honest pleasures, looks with indulgence on a certain moral laxity, which is indeed so habitual that it passes uncriticised. Among the very strictly religious population in the south-west, a pastor would be quickly got rid of if he forgot himself so far as to play the piano or drink intoxicants; but this same people some ten years ago venerated as a martyr one of their clergy who, forced to confess in public crimes against the morality of his own parishioners, was consequently deposed by the Government. His flock, of their own initiative, built him a magnificent church, and, providing him with a liberal sufficiency, retained him as the director of their spiritual welfare.

Two Oratorians, visiting Norway some years ago in a yacht, decided to spend a few days fishing at a hamlet somewhere in the Sogne Fjord. They had all the preparations for Mass with them, and wished to take a small unused chalet as a chapel. The farmer who owned the building was willing, and negotiations were concluded on payment of a nominal rent, when the farmer realised that my friends were of the Old Religion. There was no question of proselytism, as the idea concerned only the two priests and their Catholic English

SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAINS AT AUNE

friends on the yacht; but all the countryside was up in arms, and a few days later prominent personages from Christiania had arrived on the scene to put a stop to the possibility of such happenings. In the meantime, however, my friends, little dreaming of the importance attached to their doings, had pursued their way along the coast, and were innocently fishing elsewhere. At present the ecclesiastical prejudice of the Norwegians is less marked, though Jews are sedulously discouraged, and Jesuits are forbidden the country.

Various hospitals are attended by Catholic nursing sisters, who are in great favour with the medical profession and with the patients who are lucky enough to fall under their care.

All this time I am trying hard, by roundabout means, to get back to Bergen, because I wish to fit in, in proper context, a remark which I heard about the town. It seems that I cannot get back there legitimately, though I had hoped that the Sisters of Charity would help me through with their hospitals.

I was listening to the woes of the American Consul in Bergen. He was descanting on the want of entertainment and the absence of all things which make an American's life possible in any

country on the globe outside his perfect native land. I sympathised with him, and threw in a little grumble of my own, having relation to the weather. "O, the weather!" said my red-headed friend, very hopelessly and crossly. "Why, sure, if a Bergen horse sees a person without an umbrella, he shies." This seems pretty feeble as I set it down; but at the time the Consul was disconsolate and far from wishing to amuse me, bored and discontented. Thus his remark just happened to tickle me: we both laughed until we cried, and felt very much the better for the diversion.

Frequently, at times of *ennui*, we found diversion in music, or in information about that art. The lure, though perhaps it can hardly be called a musical instrument, is a primitive means of conveying sound. The herds on the mountains used it to call their cattle together. It is said that no two lures have tones exactly alike, and that the cattle are able to distinguish and place the particular sound of their guardian's lure. It is a wooden trumpet, nearly five feet long, made of two hollow pieces of birchwood, bound together throughout the whole length with strips of willow. Besides being used to call the cattle together, it is often carried by travelling parties to avert the risk of

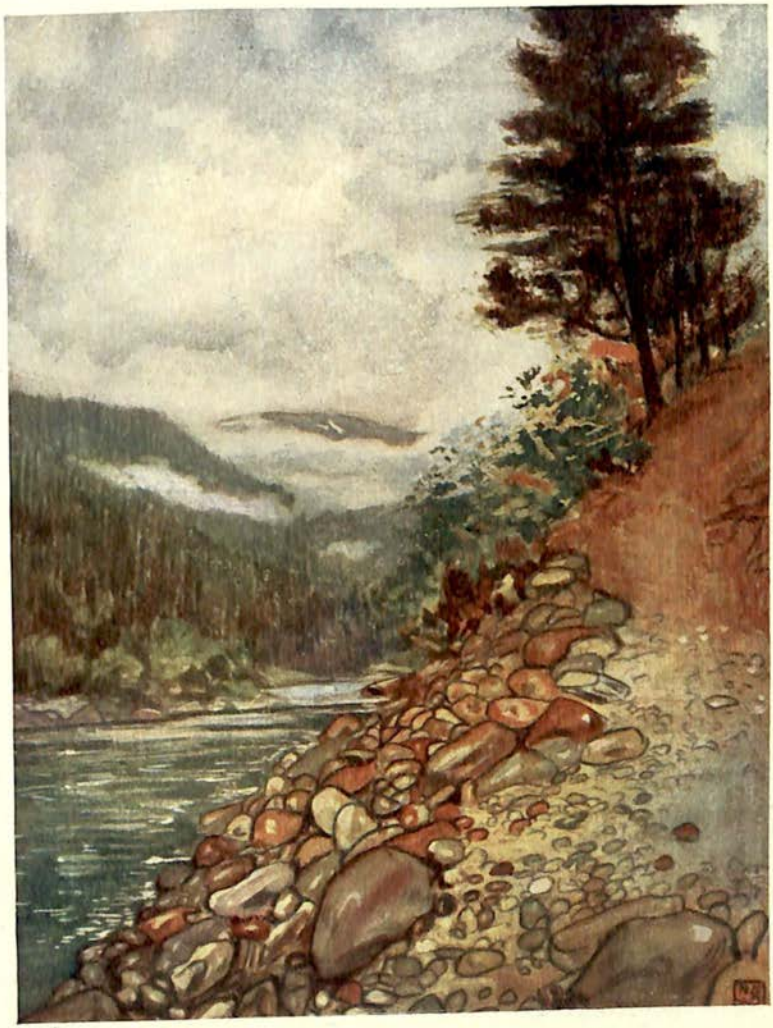
anyone being lost in the wilds. Its notes may be heard at a great distance, and are rather harsh and discordant, possessing none of the musical qualities of the Alp horn used by the Swiss for the same purpose. Grieg composed charming music for a song called "The Princess." The words led me to suppose that the lure is rather a fascinating instrument; and the above description rather disillusioned me, until I decided to allow a good deal for poetic licence.

The Norwegians are exceedingly musical. Their national music gives wonderful expression to their moods. Almost invariably in the gayest pieces one catches here and there a pathetic little droop which gives a very particular character to Norwegian music. In the country the post of fiddler is handed down from generation to generation, together with certain airs which are looked upon as family property; but official fiddlers are by no means the only musicians in the district. These are found in every family, dividing their favours between the violin and the guitar. The organist L. Lindeman did great service to his country by collecting and preserving hundreds of national ballads, dances, and hymns, which had lived only in the ear and the soul of the people, and thus

were lost entirely to the outer world. The oldest of these songs are the sagas, sung traditions that have been handed down from immemorial ages. They recount the heroic exploits of the Vikings and warriors of heathen times. Many ballads tell of the beautiful *huldre*, of the fay who presages the destruction of fishermen, of the water sprite, and of the brownies who, living underground, are covetous of cattle. To gratify their taste, the brownies help themselves to such as graze on the mountains, but only if their guardian's eyes are turned off his charges; they make dwarfs of the beasts to enable them to enter crevices in the ground, in order that they may descend to subterranean passages. Many songs about these malicious fairies do the maidens sing as they keep their eyes carefully fixed on the herds, to prevent their being stolen in like manner. Some of the songs consist of hundreds of four-line verses, which must surely be a hard test to the memory of the singers. Sometimes two singers will have a duet in such a song, singing verse after verse alternately. He whose memory, or, in default of memory, invention, fails him first is loser.

The Norwegian national dances have in their melodies and rhythms a bold and natural char-

RIVER AT GJORA



acter which gives them considerable worth. The principal are the *halling*, a Hardanger solo dance consisting of wild gyrations and vigorous kicks at rafters of the room. He who kicks highest is the champion. The other dance is the *springar*, which is a dance for two, with no less call for the display of muscular powers.

The two favourite instruments of the people, on which all this music has been played for centuries, are the langelik, which somewhat resembles a zither, and the Hardanger violin. The langelik has a long, flat body, with round holes, and at least seven strings, which are struck with a plectrum. The tone is rather weak, and the sound is somewhat monotonous, as the possibility of producing modulated sounds is almost entirely excluded.

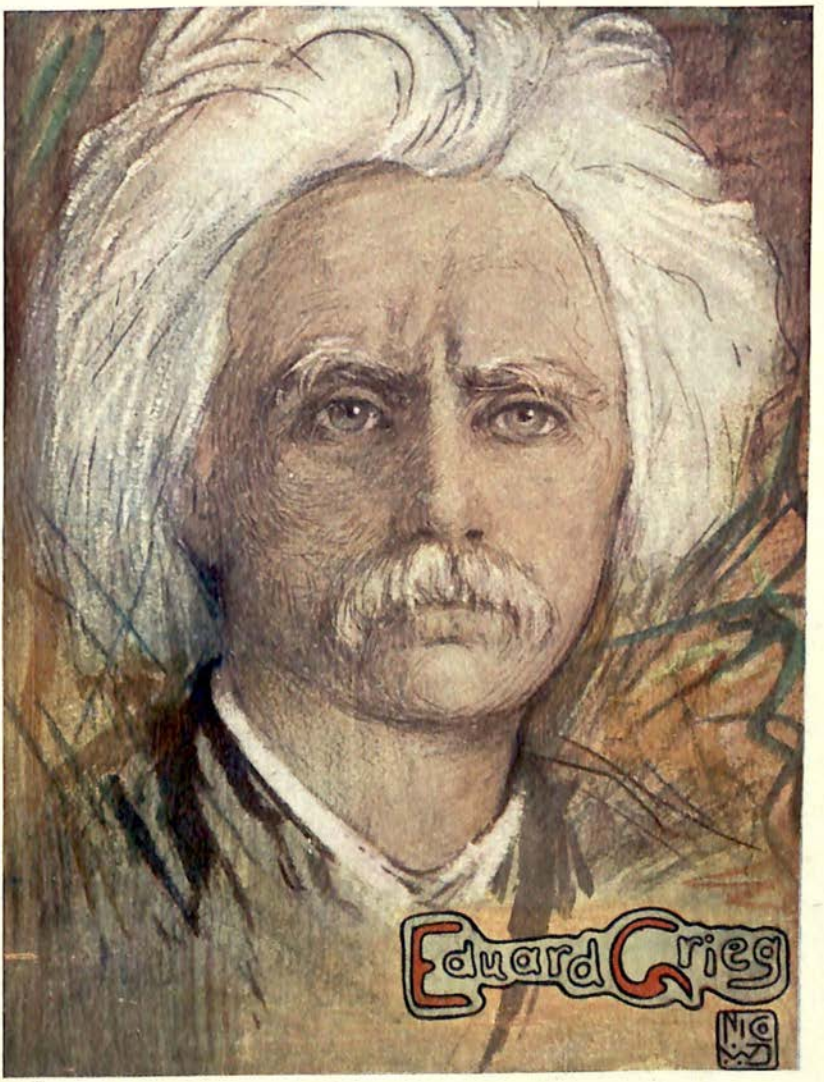
The Hardanger fiddle is higher and more arched in its build than the violin we know. The instrument is decorated as much as possible, the scroll being a dragon's head, or something equally fantastic; and the body of the fiddle is richly carved and ornamented with incrustations of ivory and mother-of-pearl. Beneath the four upper strings, which are tuned to suit the individual tastes of the musician, and under the finger-board, there are four, sometimes more, sympathetic strings of

fine steel wire. By the aid of this instrument the people make wonderful sketches in music descriptive of the beauty of dawn and the close of a summer's day, with the birds' trills, or the huldre's song, or the ringing of marriage bells. I have all this from a Norwegian book, and from instruments I have both seen and heard.

The best known of the modern music-makers of the north is the great Norwegian Edward Grieg, whose genius is familiar to all musicians the world over. He was born in Bergen, and lives there still, though he has travelled much in Germany, Holland, and Italy. Another name which we know well in this country is that of Sinding, who is of the younger generation.

Norway has no regular opera; but the concerts which are given in the beautiful National Theatre are eagerly attended, and the programmes are representative of the musical talent of Europe.

TRONDHJEM


Eduard Grieg

LEGENDS AND LITERATURE

CHAPTER X

LEGENDS AND LITERATURE

In Norwegian folk-lore the devil is a person with many relations, who are called *Jutuls*. In favour of the legends about them there is often some circumstantial evidence. Does a mountain or a rock bear similitude to the figures of human beings or of animals? Be sure that the Norwegians will have some tradition to account for the formation by proving to you that such rocks or mountains are the various creatures they resemble, bewitched. In the voyage along the northern coast of Norway from Trondhjem to the North Cape, the traveller will pass seven extraordinary mountains called "The Seven Sisters." A little farther he will see a rocky island which from certain points of view resembles a cloaked man on horseback riding into the sea. The head and ears of the horse are particularly natural.

The history of these islands is entertaining.

One of the devil's younger brothers, who lived in this district, went on a visit to his seven sisters, who, like himself, were of giant growth. The sisters had with them a female cousin. With this Jutula their brother fell in love, and, as is customary in such cases, they swore eternal fidelity to each other. Business called the Jutul home; his beloved cousin was sent for to nurse a sick brother. She fulfilled this duty to admiration, and in the weakness of his convalescence her brother listened to the story of her love and promised her that she should wed her Jutul cousin. On his complete recovery he became less amenable, and, ignoring his promise, insisted that his sister should wed one of his dissolute companions. It is said that the Jutula's chief objection to this man was that he smelt strongly of tobacco; but I think that this must be embroidery, as my story is older than the use of tobacco. In any case, her refusal was absolute, and the brother was obliged to employ malignant magic. All the messengers from the Jutul, loving and beloved by his sister, were turned into rocks before they could reach her ear. The amorous Jutul was not aware that his beloved had a brother, or any other relation, and, concluding that she was the last of her race, believed also that it was

HENRIK IBSEN

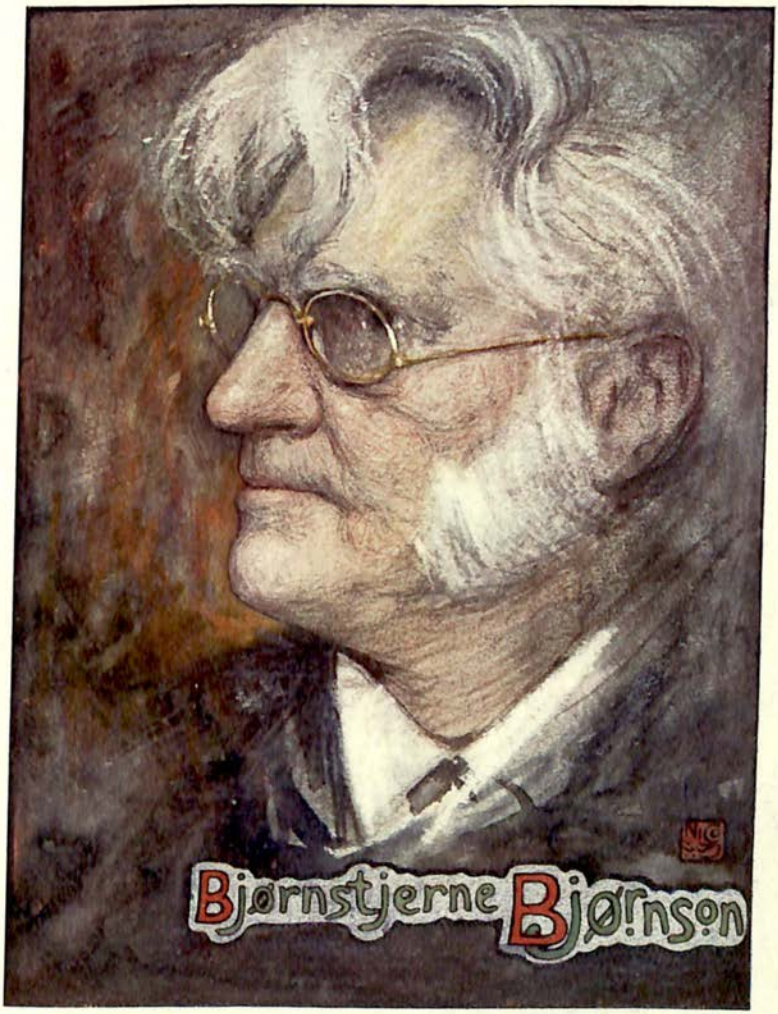
Henrik Ibsen

she who had petrified his messengers. Wrathful, and having as his birthright an unerring aim, he mounted his steed and shot from his cross-bow a bolt at the dwelling of the Jutula. The perfidious brother was bathing at the time, and, presumably for the purposes of the story, he wore a sou'wester. The bolt, shot from seventy miles' distance, passed through the hat, and carried away a portion of the victim's skull; then, skimming the water, it pierced the heart of the fair one. She knew that only her lover had this unerring aim, and, thinking him faithless and cruel, used her dying moments in the exercise of her hereditary power, and petrified herself, her lover, his horse, and the floating sou'wester. There they remain to this day. Overlooking the scene of sorrow stand the seven sisters of the misguided lover, petrified with horror at the fate of their relations. The distance between the various islands is considerable; but it must be remembered that we tell of giants.

Norwegian geography abounds in spots such as these, to which are attached legends; and in no country is the folk-lore more rich and varied. The charming story-teller, Asbjornsen, and his friend Bishop Moe, collected many delightful fairy-tales, mostly traditional, but eked out by their own

imaginations. These stories are entrancing, and at the time when they were first given to the public they awoke a romantic tendency in Norwegian literature. They had a great influence on the work of Joseph Welhaven, contemporary with the great Weigeland, who died at this time. Welhaven had been rather overshadowed by his rival, who, for the part he had played in political struggles, was idolised as the people's hero. Also, his work had been too much influenced by the great Germans who were his contemporaries. The charming figures in the fairy-tales of his country gave him inspiration for wonderful romances with the genuine Norwegian ring and subjects taken from national life. Asbjornsen, however, is more than a retailer of folk-lore. He frames his tales in description of the country in which he has found them on the lips of the people, and thus produces vivid pictures of peasant life. The sister of Henrik Weigeland, Camille Collett, during her widowhood burst forth as a literary genius. Apart from her talents as a writer, she was one of the pioneers of the women's movement in Norway, which country has been more influenced by this agitation than any other European State. Immense importance is attached to it; the great geniuses Ibsen and

BJORNSTJERNE BJORNSON


Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

Bjornsen show much interest in the moral side of the question; and all Norwegians are very eager to discuss the subject, which is far too large and complicated for myself.

Ibsen is best known as a playwright. Indeed, from the time he succeeded in drama all other interests were put aside. The Norwegian Government provided him, at the age of thirty-six, with pecuniary aid to enable him to travel. It was in Rome that he wrote two of his greatest plays, *Peer Gynt* and *Brand.* To-day his literary activity has ceased, and all who will may see the great man seated at a window of his flat in Christiania almost any time during the livelong day.

Bjornstjerne Bjornsen is still producing. He has written delightful romances; but for the last few years he, like Ibsen, has devoted himself to the stage. It is interesting to note that the splendid National Theatre in Christiania is managed by the writer's eldest son. His plays and those of Ibsen are magnificently acted, and always received with enthusiastic appreciation by the Norwegian public, which gives all its great men a splendid meed of appreciative recognition—how well deserved it is, the whole world will acknowledge. The translated

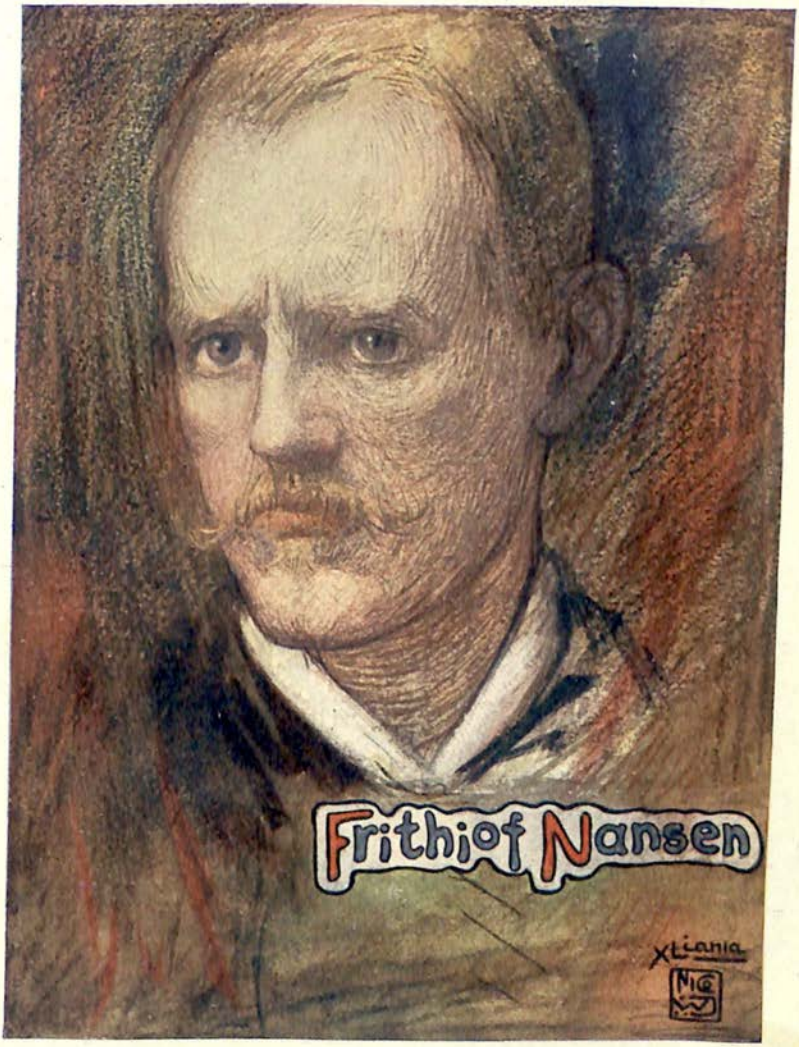
commentary on the Norwegian literature of the last fifty years makes me feel that I would give everything for a knowledge of the language sufficient to let me enter into the treasure-house of untranslated genius.

Many of our modern authors are translated into Norwegian. I noticed that every book-shop window contained caricatures of Mark Twain and translations of his works. Surely there was some particular reason for this celebrity of an American humourist in Norway over and above the excellence of his works, which one would have thought difficult to do justice by in translation?

German books form a large part of the stock-in-trade of the Norwegian bookseller. The German language is very generally known — much more so than either French or English. In this and many other things it is plainly to be seen that there is much good feeling between Germany and Norway.

Public baths are to be found all over Norway—in some places are still found the *badstuer*. These are primitive Turkish baths, timber rooms heated with red-hot stones. Water is poured on the stones, and scalding steam is produced. I read

FRIDTJOF NANSEN


Frithiof Nansen
Xtiania

in an old book on Norway an account by an American traveller of a visit to such a bath. He appears to have been rather a popular person among the Norwegian peasants, and was invited one Saturday in the depth of winter to assist at the general ablution. He relates with much amusing comment how all the bathers ran from their dwelling-places to the "bath chamber" in what he calls "the costume of Paradise." This in the depth of winter! Determined to do the whole thing properly, he followed their chilly example. At the bath, the whole company sat round the room on a sort of shelf. When they were thoroughly well steamed they wended their way back to their respective houses in the same lack of costume. There was no discrimination of sexes.

The writer speaks in high praise of the simplicity, innocence, and cleanliness of the people. There is in all writings on Norway a unanimity as to their good qualities. For my own part, the points about them that impressed me most were their absolute honesty and the complete absence of servility. While any Norwegian is delighted to show politeness to the stranger, and even to take a good deal of trouble in helping him on his way, all these attentions arise from a supreme feeling of

courtesy and rarely from hope of reward. Anyone wishing to have particular information as to a subject concerning the country will be met on all sides with practical offers of assistance. He will find books relating to his subject showered upon him, and kind offers to accompany him and show him practical illustrations. This generous spirit, which has its source in love of the native land, is nowhere more marked than in such an establishment as Bennet's, the Thomas Cook and Sons of Norway. This, one would say, is a strictly commercial affair; yet there is no end to the trouble Bennet or his staff will take to encourage visitors to see as much as possible of their lovely country in a pleasant way, and this without remuneration of any kind.

Writing from Norway in 1820, a visitor says:— "There is no country which accords better with my taste than Norway, nor is there any cast of inhabitants or people that I have visited for whom I have more esteem. Here at least are the true haunts of simple natures, and it has been one of the pleasantest passages of my life to dwell among the mountains. The Norwegians are a virtuous race; patriarchal simplicity, uprightness and hospitality, kindness and piety, are their

characteristics. They entertain great reverence for their laws. .. In many other countries the laws are not obeyed on one uniform principle; here, on the contrary, the people respect them from principle."

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